

AUTUMN 1991

VOLUME 17

NUMBER 4

**JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN  
CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

---

*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (ISSN 0097-9740) is published quarterly: Autumn, Winter, Spring, and Summer by The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, 5720 S. Woodlawn, Chicago, IL 60637.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** U.S.A.: institutions, 1 year \$70.00; individuals, 1 year \$31.00; students, 1 year \$22.00 (with photocopy of validated student ID); NWSA members (individuals) \$25.00. In Canada: add 7% GST to subscription price. Outside U.S.A. add \$5.00 for each year's subscription to cover postage. Single copy rates: institutions \$17.50, individuals, \$7.75. Checks should be payable to *Signs*, The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637, VISA and MASTERCARD accepted. Include charge number and signature with order.

**EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE** Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres and Barbara Laslett, Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, 495 Ford Hall, 224 Church Street, S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS** Please notify the Press and local postmaster immediately, providing *both* the old and new addresses. *Allow 4 weeks for change.* Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers will supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and reserve stock will permit. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Signs*, The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637.

**COPYING BEYOND FAIR USE** The code on the first page of an article in this journal indicates the copyright owner's consent that copies of the article may be made beyond those permitted by Sections 107 or 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law provided that copies are made only for personal or internal use, or for the personal or internal use of specific clients and provided that the copier pay the stated per-copy fee through the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 27 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970. To request permission for other kinds of copying, such as copying for general distribution, for advertising or promotional purposes, for creating new collective works, or for resale, kindly write to Permissions Department, University of Chicago Press, 5801 S. Ellis Ave., Chicago, IL 60637. Volumes available in microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

**ADVERTISING** For information and rates about advertising in *Signs* and rental of its subscriber list, contact Advertising, University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, 5720 S. Woodlawn, Chicago, IL 60637, (312) 702-8187/7361. Advertising and list rental are limited to material of scholarly interest to our subscribers.

Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois and at additional mailing offices.

© 1991 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials. ANSI Z39.48-1984. ☉

# CONTENTS



- |                    |    |   |
|--------------------|----|---|
| Susan Sperling     | 1  | Baboons with Briefcases: Feminism, Functionalism, and Sociobiology in the Evolution of Primate Gender |
| Jane Desmond       | 28 | Dancing Out the Difference: Cultural Imperialism and Ruth St. Denis's "Radha" of 1906                 |
| Maggie Berg        | 50 | Luce Irigaray's "Contradictions": Poststructuralism and Feminism                                      |
| Daphne de Marneffe | 71 | Looking and Listening: The Construction of Clinical Knowledge in Charcot and Freud                    |

## FORUM

- |                      |     |  |
|----------------------|-----|--|
|                      | 112 | Introduction to Forum  |
| Malgorzata Fuszara   | 117 | Legal Regulation of Abortion in Poland   |
| Dorothy J. Rosenberg | 129 | Shock Therapy: GDR Women in Transition from a Socialist Welfare State to a Social Market Economy |
| Julia Szalai         | 152 | Some Aspects of the Changing Situation of Women in Hungary                                       |

## REVISIONS/REPORTS

- |                 |     |   |
|-----------------|-----|---|
| Shirley Mangini | 171 | Memories of Resistance: Female Activists from the Spanish Civil War |
|-----------------|-----|---|

## ARCHIVES

- |           |     |   |
|-----------|-----|---|
| Shan Holt | 187 | The Anatomy of a Marriage: Letters of Emma Spaulding Bryant, 1873 |
|-----------|-----|---|

## BOOK REVIEWS

- |                |     |   |
|----------------|-----|---|
| Joan B. Landes | 205 | <i>The Oppositional Imagination: Feminism, Critique, and Political Theory</i> by Joan Cocks; <i>Beyond Oppression: Feminist Theory and Political Strategy</i> by M. E. Hawkesworth; <i>Justice, Gender, and the Family</i> by Susan Moller Okin |
|----------------|-----|---|

## CONTENTS

- Ernestine L. McHugh      **210** *Marriage and Inequality in Classless Societies* by Jane Fishburne Collier; *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* by Marilyn Strathern
- Lisa J. Disch      **214** *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* by Lori D. Ginzberg; *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: A State and the Nation* by Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart; *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* by Mary P. Ryan; *Women, Politics, and Change* edited by Louise A. Tilly and Patricia Gurin.
- Nancy Folbre      **220** *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women* by Claudia Dale Goldin; *Job Queues, Gender Queues: Explaining Women's Inroads into Male Occupations* by Barbara F. Reskin and Patricia A. Roos; *Doing Comparable Worth: Gender, Class and Pay Equity* by Joan Acker
- Ava Baron      **224** *Women and Industrialization: Gender at Work in Nineteenth-Century England* by Judy Low; *A Women's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences* by Alice Kessler-Harris
- Brenda Gayle Plummer      **229** *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* by Barbara Bush; *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* by Sandra Lauderdale Graham; *Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean* by Marietta Morrissey
- Carolyn Allen      **233** *Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction* edited by Ellen G. Friedman and Miriam Fuchs; *Femme Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern* by Patricia Waugh; *Herself Beheld: The Literature of the Looking Glass* by Jenijoy La Belle

KP 3668



CONTENTS

Dianne E. Farrell

- 236** *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture* by Joanna Hubbs; *Goddess Embroideries of Eastern Europe* by Mary B. Kelly
- 241** United States and International Notes
- 244** Comment and Reply Policy
- 245** About the Contributors
- 249** Notice to Contributors

---

# Baboons with Briefcases: Feminism, Functionalism, and Sociobiology in the Evolution of Primate Gender

*Susan Sperling*

**S**TUDIES OF MONKEYS and apes have never been just about monkeys and apes. Historically, humans have wondered about the status of nonhuman primates, about the ways in which they are like and unlike us. With the rise of evolutionary thought in nineteenth-century Europe, our views of the nonhuman primates became firmly tied to our understanding of our own development over evolutionary time. In the Western imagination, primates are now central to the iconography of the human past, including the meanings of sexual divisions in human societies.

Modern Western primate studies arose largely through "natural" field studies in decolonized Africa and other Third World sites in the period following World War II.<sup>1</sup> Soon thereafter, anthropological primatologists and their advocates in other disciplines began to fit data about monkeys and apes into models of human evolution. The template for this enterprise had been set earlier in the century by Robert M. Yerkes and Clarence Ray Carpenter, both of whom worked with nonhuman primates to

Some of the ideas in this article are the result of a long, ongoing dialogue with Micaela di Leonardo about anthropology, feminism, and the relationship between social theory and evolutionary science. I gratefully acknowledge her help in the articulation of these topics as presented here. Donna Haraway's perspectives on modern primate studies have played an important role in my approach to various functionalist agendas in primatology.

<sup>1</sup> This article focuses on Western primatology, but it is important to note that Japan has also been a major center for primatological research. Africa was the initial location of the early postwar field studies, following which primatologists worked in Asia, South America, and the Caribbean. For a full account of these developments, see Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1989).

[*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1991, vol. 17, no. 1]

© 1991 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved 0097-9740/92/1701-0005\$01.00

examine human evolutionary issues,<sup>2</sup> but it is in the period since World War II that the primatological enterprise has flourished. Field and laboratory observations of primates have produced a large body of data on the behavior of diverse species. The integration of these facts into models for human evolution has consumed over two decades of scholarship. Gender differences in hominids (humans and protohumans) have been a major focus of these models, which often have proposed that changing reproductive behavior is the central factor in the hominid transition.<sup>3</sup>

From media stars such as Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey to well-known academics such as Jeanne Altmann, Alison Richard, and Thelma Rowell, women always have been a visible presence in the demographics of modern primate research. This alone has sometimes produced a vague sense that feminist "correctives" to male models of primate behavior exist. However, such an impression can be deceptive. The history of accounts of gendered behaviors among primates is not encompassed by a simple evolutionary story of the triumph of good feminist research over bad sexist research. To assess the growth of the feminist tree in primatology, we must view it as part of an entire forest of modern intellectual developments.

Two theories of ultimate causality have dominated primatological models for the origins of monkey, ape, and human gendered behavior: structural-functionalism and sociobiology. The structural-functionalist model, British social anthropology's key contribution to twentieth-century social science, explains the structural pattern of social institutions in terms of how they function as integrated systems to fulfill individual and societal human needs. Anthropologists in the period following World War II translated this theory to their observations of nonhuman primates; they viewed savanna baboon behaviors as adaptations that "functioned" both to promote individual survival and to maintain stable troop life. As we shall see, this perspective structured much theory about the evolution of human gendered behaviors as extrapolated from studies of baboons and other monkeys and apes. Male dominance was viewed as functioning to organize and control the troop in much the same way as political leadership functions in human cultures. There are many problems with this simple analogy.

<sup>2</sup> Donna Haraway, "Animal Sociology and a Natural Economy of the Body Politic, Part I: A Political Physiology of Dominance," and "Animal Sociology and a Natural Economy of the Body Politic, Part II: The Part Is the Contested Zone: Human Nature and Theories of Production and Reproduction in Primate Behavior Studies," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 21-36, 37-60.

<sup>3</sup> For opposing views on this issue, see Adrienne Zihlman, "Women and Evolution, Part II: Subsistence and Social Organization among Early Hominids," *Signs* 4, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 4-20; and Owen Lovejoy, "The Origin of Man," *Science* 211, no. 4480 (1981): 341-50.

In the mid-1970s, sociobiology replaced structural-functionalism as the preeminent explanatory model. According to the sociobiologists, behaviors always evolve to maximize the reproductive fitness of individuals (the relative percentage of genes passed on to future generations). Although differing in some significant ways, both models explain the existence of gender-dimorphic behaviors as functioning to increase evolutionary fitness and as controlled in unspecified ways by genes. Both kinds of functionalist arguments for the origin of sexually dimorphic behaviors among humans explain these behaviors as adaptations to past selective pressures in primate or hominid phylogeny. In the past, many of these reconstructions have been overtly sexist; some more recent functionalist hypotheses have attempted to redress former androcentric biases. For instance, some sociobiologists have recently asserted that female primates harass each other in an effort to increase their own genetic advantages. According to this interpretation, attacks on pregnant monkeys and apes by other females are efforts by the attackers to gain a genetic advantage by reducing the number of competitors' offspring. Superficially, such models may seem at times to tell a "good" feminist primate story, by positing, for example, that female primates are aggressive strategists in pursuit of their own reproductive advantages rather than passive objects over which males compete. But these new narratives, although more palatable for some feminists, rest on poor empirical foundations. We do not fully understand the biological, social, and ecological roots of non-human primate aggression.

Donna Haraway has applauded "feminist sociobiology" as telling a better story for feminists than did earlier functionalist models, but she also notes its failure to posit a fully alternative theory about gender differences and human origins:

Feminist contests for authoritative accounts of evolution and behavioral biology are not simply alternatives, but equally as biased as the masculinist stories so prominent in the early decades of the field. To count as better stories, they have to better account for what it means to be *human* and *animal*. They have to offer a fuller, more coherent vision, one that allows the monkeys and apes to be seen more accurately.

But what will count as more accurate, fuller, more coherent? Rarely will feminist contests for scientific meaning work by replacing one paradigm with another, by proposing and successfully establishing fully alternative accounts and theories. Rather, as a form of narrative practice or story-telling, feminist practice in primatology has worked more by altering a "field" of stories or possible explanatory accounts, by raising the cost of defending some ac-

counts, by destabilizing the plausibility of some strategies or explanations.<sup>4</sup>

"Fully alternative accounts" of the development of gendered behaviors in primates can, and must, be developed. Feminist sociobiology does not represent progress for feminist evolutionary science because it suggests a biological essentialism at the heart of human behavior. In following its path, we abandon those research strategies that might lead us to insights about gendered aspects of human aggression, among other things.

Feminist sociobiologists have retold the story of evolution, giving females an active role, but in using the old narrative structures they tell us little about the development of complex behaviors and their context-dependent expressions. The new female primate is dressed for success and lives in a troop that resembles the modern corporation: now everyone gets to eat power lunches on the savanna. But is it advantageous merely to change one narrative element, as feminist sociobiology has done, so that the category "female," like "male," is constructed as active, dominant, and looking out for genetic advantages? I think not, and I want to argue instead for a deconstruction of all functionalist models, including sociobiological ones, of sex-linked primate behaviors. I think we can hope for more accurate, fuller, more coherent approaches to the study of primate gender differences (some of which may help us to understand aspects of human behavior) than those proposed by functionalists of the last two decades. New theoretical and methodological approaches must attend to the context-dependent nature of behavioral development in primates and the behavioral diversity among different species and in so doing abandon reductionist-functionalist models. But in order to understand feminist sociobiology and its deficiencies, we need a better sense of the unfolding story of primate studies and structural-functionalist and sociobiological models.

For two decades, functionalist reductionism in primatology has seemed almost immune to sophisticated arguments about evolutionary epistemology in other disciplines; primatologists who have addressed this problem have sometimes found themselves tarred with the brush of "anti-Darwinism" and "antievolutionism." Stephen Jay Gould has written of the frustrations involved in critiquing adaptationism: "A former student of mine recently completed a study proving that color patterns of certain clam shells did not have the adaptive significance usually claimed. A leading journal rejected her paper with the comment: 'Why would you want to publish such

<sup>4</sup> Haraway's assertion that feminist sociobiology tells a better feminist story is meant ironically (personal communication). See Donna Haraway, "Primatology Is Politics by Other Means: Women's Place Is in the Jungle," in *Feminist Approaches to Science*, ed. Ruth Blier (New York: Pergamon, 1986), 77-118.

nonresults?"<sup>5</sup> As Gould points out, the study of gender differences suffers from the same bias, a problem in what is privileged as publishable. Measured gender differences are reported and attract attention from the press. What we do not know is how often such differences are not found and the results not published.<sup>6</sup>

Other things shape behavior besides genes and shape it in important ways for the organisms in question. In rodents, for instance, there are a number of maternal behavioral responses resulting from developmental sensitivity to normally invariant environmental conditions. In many species, only females show parental care behaviors, whereas males are always aggressive or indifferent toward infants. But this difference is not determined solely by genetics or hormones; parental caretaking is a developmental behavioral response in females, who are always present at the time of birth. Males develop some of the same caretaking patterns, such as posturing for nursing, when exposed to newborn young. From an evolutionary point of view, such new behaviors may develop and persist in a population either because of changes in the average genotype by natural selection or by enduring changes in the environment in which the average genotype develops.

As biologist Susan Oyama points out, an ant larva may become a worker or a queen, depending on nutrition, temperature, and other variables, just as a male rodent may exhibit nurturant behaviors when exposed to certain stimuli.<sup>7</sup> Control does not flow only from the gene outward. To understand the vastly more complex developmental sequences involved in the acquisition of gendered primate behavior, we must study it developmentally rather than attempting to reduce discourse to arguments about ultimate genetic fitness. There is much more to understanding the development of behavior than retrospectively hypothesizing its adaptative function.<sup>8</sup> Considering the presently confounding array of data on gender-role dimorphism in different primate species, it seems that three things are likely to provide both better questions and answers about behavioral dimorphism: emphasis on both context and development of behavior, a rejection of essentialism and gender dualism,

<sup>5</sup> Stephen J. Gould, "Cardboard Darwinism," *New York Review of Books* 33 (September 1986): 47-54.

<sup>6</sup> An excellent investigation of these null hypotheses may be found in Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories about Women and Men* (New York: Basic, 1985).

<sup>7</sup> Susan Oyama, *The Ontogeny of Information: Developmental Systems and Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> Within the functionalist framework, development is usually viewed backward from the adult form, taking as the starting point sex differences in adult behavior. Linda Burke has made this point in her critique of the hormone and behavior literature of the 1950s and 1960s, in which hormones are reified as causal factors; see Linda Burke, *Women, Feminism, and Biology: The Feminist Challenge* (New York: Methuen, 1986).

and a focus on the interaction between organisms and their environments of development. This mandates not the complete abandonment of functionalist models but their integration with other levels of causality.

For over two decades, an obsession with gender-role dimorphism (sexually differing behaviors) as an adaptative mechanism has impeded our understanding of the origins and maintenance of such sexually distinct behaviors in primates—behaviors that, after all, vary greatly both within and across species. Functionalist interpretations of primate behavior view sexually dimorphic traits as end points of natural selection and attempt to explain the selective pressures that might have brought these traits into being, while failing to explain their mechanisms of development and great variety of expressions. These approaches propose a kind of Panglossian philosophy that all behavior is adaptive, although there is much accumulating evidence that this is by no means the case.

The uses of nonhuman primate behavior for understanding human evolution raise important epistemological questions about how we know things in evolutionary science; feminist scholars and others in the evolutionary sciences are beginning to address these questions. As Gould and others have argued, many aspects of morphology and behavior cannot be explained only as direct results of natural selection.<sup>9</sup> Researchers must begin to examine the multiply contingent pathways along which biological systems develop and the complex ways in which extraorganismic factors interact with organisms at every stage of development. Emphasis on contingency in the development of biological and behavioral systems leads inevitably away from the biological essentialism (the belief that gendered behaviors are genetically determined) so pervasive in functionalist evolutionary models in primatology.

But such epistemological critiques of functionalism are rarely raised outside the scholarly enclaves in which evolutionary biologists meet. Such discourse almost never reaches social scientists, among whom the debate has been disastrously constructed as one between reductionists in the biological and evolutionary sciences who contend that genetic mechanisms selected over phylogenetic history control important human behaviors and feminists and other cultural constructionists who deny that biology has any important role in human experience. In both scholarly and popular discussions, writers disseminate the currently privileged functionalist model in journals, at conferences, and in the popular press.<sup>10</sup> Although

<sup>9</sup> See Stephen J. Gould and E. Vrba, "Exaptation—a Missing Term in the Science of Form," *Paleobiology* 8 (1982): 4–15.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, the epistemological failures of sociobiology have been critiqued since the early 1980s by the Cambridge-based Sociobiology Study Group of Science for the People (Sociobiology Study Group of Science for the People, "Sociobiology—Another Biological Determinism," *Bioscience* 26, no. 3 [March 1976]: 182–86), and by other

a number of primatologists have argued for years against the obsession with ultimate causality that has come to dominate the field, their ideas have not been widely conveyed outside the discipline.<sup>11</sup>

### Structural-functionalist models of primate gendered behavior

When I began my tenure as a graduate student in physical anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1970s, modern primate studies had emerged from a period in which a relatively small number of researchers collected natural histories of a variety of primate species in the field and had entered an era of widespread structural-functionalist model building.<sup>12</sup> The first period, the natural history stage of primate studies, occurred roughly between 1950 and 1965. In the second stage (from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s), data from a variety of field studies, particularly those of savanna baboons and the chimpanzees of the Gombe Reserve in Tanzania, were incorporated into structural-functionalist models for human evolution centering on the sexual division of labor, the origins of the family, and the origins of human gendered behavior. The third phase came in the late 1970s with the hegemony of sociobiology as the functionalist model par excellence for understanding behavioral evolution.<sup>13</sup>

---

groups who find it scientifically flawed. The latter have had little voice in the popular diffusion of ideas about evolution and animal behavior. Gould's antisociobiological volleys in his "Cardboard Darwinism" are a rare exception. For a strong and exhaustive critique of sociobiology, see Phillip Kitcher, *Vaulting Ambition: Sociobiology and the Quest for Human Nature* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> A recent expression of this minority opinion is primatologist Bernstein's statement on functionalism in primatology: "Proof by assertion, plausible argument and consensual validation are no substitute for evidence. The scientific method consists of developing hypotheses from available observation or theory and then testing to see if the null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between the phenomenon under study and the hypothesized independent variable, can be rejected at some predetermined level of confidence. Many sociobiologists seem satisfied only to have proposed an hypothesis, and expect others to do the work of providing the evidence. . . . Ideas are cheap. Evidence from rigorous scientific tests is hard to produce" (Irwin S. Bernstein, "Primate Status Hierarchies," *American Zoologist* 8, no. 741 [1968]: 111).

<sup>12</sup> Primatologists work in a variety of disciplines such as zoology and comparative psychology. Although a concern with human evolution has never been universal among primatologists, it is ubiquitous among anthropologists who study prosimians, monkeys, and apes.

<sup>13</sup> Primate studies began early in the century with the work of Robert M. Yerkes and Clarence Carpenter, and the use of nonhuman primates as models for the evolution of human gendered behaviors predates the postwar period. Yerkes was concerned with questions of gender and dominance in his laboratory research with apes in the 1920s and 1930s, but his theory and methodology—while not unrelated to the modern studies reviewed in this article—are different in important ways from the works under review. For discussion of the origins of twentieth-century primate studies and the social agendas informing the early work, see Haraway, "Animal Sociology and a Natural Economy of the Body Politic, Part I" (n. 2 above).



The first wave of postwar anthropological primatology included a number of long-term studies that laid the foundations of the discipline.<sup>14</sup> Jeanne and Stuart Altmann studied baboon ecology and behavior at Amboseli National Park, Kenya; Stuart Altmann initiated research on rhesus monkeys on the Caribbean island of Cayo Santiago, followed by Donald Sade and his student Elizabeth Missakian and others; and several researchers worked on the Smithsonian project with howler monkeys at Barro Colorado.<sup>15</sup> Research accelerated in the 1960s: Goodall began her observations at the Gombe Stream Reserve in Tanzania (Japanese workers had studied chimpanzees in Tanzania since 1965); Thomas Struhsaker and others studied several species of monkeys in the Kibale Forest of Uganda; Sherwood Washburn and Irven DeVore studied savanna baboons in the Serengeti National Park, Kenya; Fossey initiated observations of mountain gorillas in 1967 in Rwanda's Parc de Volcans; and Phyllis Dolhinow researched Indian langur monkeys at several sites in India.<sup>16</sup> Most of these studies (and this is only a partial list) were descriptive natural histories with few explicit links made to human evolution.<sup>17</sup>

During the second stage of modern primatology, which began in the mid-1960s, structural-functionalist analysis became central to the problem-

<sup>14</sup> Haraway, *Primate Visions* (n. 1 above), 115–275.

<sup>15</sup> Stuart A. Altmann and Jeanne Altmann, *Baboon Ecology: African Field Research* (Basel, Munchen: S. Karger, 1970; distributed in the United States by Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Stuart A. Altmann, "A Field Study of the Sociobiology of Rhesus Monkeys, *Macaca mulatta*," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 102, no. 2 (1962): 338–435; Donald S. Sade, "Some Aspects of Parent-Offspring and Sibling Relations in a Group of Rhesus Monkeys, with a Discussion of Grooming," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (1965): 1–17, and "Determinants of Dominance in a Group of Free-ranging Rhesus Monkeys," in *Social Communication among Primates*, ed. Stuart A. Altmann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Nicholas E. Collias and Charles H. Southwick, "A Field Study of Population Density and Social Organization in Howling Monkeys," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 96 (1952): 143–56.

<sup>16</sup> Jane Goodall, "My Life among the Wild Chimpanzees," *National Geographic Magazine* 124, no. 2 (August 1963): 272–308; Toshisada Nishida, "Preliminary Information on the Pygmy Chimpanzee (*Pan paniscus*) of the Congo Basin," *Primates* 13 (1972): 415–25; Thomas Struhsaker, "Social Behavior of Mother and Infant Vervet Monkeys (*Cercopithecus aethiops*)," *Animal Behavior* 19 (1971): 233–50; Sherwood L. Washburn and Irven DeVore, "Social Behavior of Baboons and Early Man," in *The Social Life of Early Man*, ed. Sherwood Washburn (New York: Aldine, 1961), 91–105; Dian Fossey, "Making Friends with Mountain Gorillas," *National Geographic Magazine* 137, no. 1 (January 1970): 48–68; Phyllis Dolhinow, *Primate Patterns* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972).

<sup>17</sup> A number of important organizational events served to consolidate modern primatology as a science. Important among these was the 1962–63 "Primate Year" organized by Washburn and Hamburg at the Stanford Institute for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, Calif. Three major international conferences took place in 1962, producing edited volumes. See Haraway's *Primate Visions*, 123–24, for a list of these events.

oriented studies that replaced the earlier emphasis on natural history.<sup>18</sup> Primatology was then, as it is today, a heterogeneous field that included research on proximate causal factors affecting social behavior and on the complex interaction between social structure, behavior, and ecology (socioecology).<sup>19</sup> But it is the structural-functionalist grand theory builders, those who have focused exclusively on ultimate causality, who have been the progenitors of the most influential and popular visions of primate behavior. In the functionalist models of the 1960s and 1970s, all aspects of behavior within a primate troop were explained as adaptive mechanisms. Thus, the roles of females and males in different species were interpreted as selected during the phylogenetic history of the species because they "functioned" to promote survival.

Lynda Marie Fedigan has reviewed many of the evolutionary reconstructions by primatologists of this period.<sup>20</sup> She points out that the "baboonization" of early human life in such models rested on a savanna ecological analogy: since protohominids evolved on the African savanna, presumably they would have shared certain selective pressures with modern baboon troops, particularly for predator protection by large males. Washburn, DeVore, and other early baboon researchers had viewed male dominance as functioning to organize troop members hierarchically and to control overt aggression. Fedigan argues that the other primary model for protohominid evolution, that of the chimpanzees studied by Goodall at the Gombe Reserve in Tanzania, was far preferable. Here the analogy rested on a phylogenetic relationship between chimp and human, which is immensely closer. This model emphasized the mother-offspring bond, sharing within the matrifocal family, the immigration of young females to new groups, birth spacing, and temporary sex bonding. It is to this chimpanzee behavioral model that the first wave of feminist authors, in particular, the constructors of the "woman the gatherer" model, would turn for primatological evidence of the social centrality of females in early hominid evolution.<sup>21</sup>

The savanna baboon model was compatible with, and tended to bolster, a Hobbesian view of human society, while the chimpanzee model

<sup>18</sup> See Lynda Marie Fedigan, *Primate Paradigms: Sex Roles and Social Bonds* (Montreal: Eden, 1982); and Haraway, *Primate Visions*, for discussions of the periodization of primatology.

<sup>19</sup> A number of primatologists have seen primate studies as part of socioecology, viewing primates within the context of mammalian social and ecological adaptations rather than as human surrogates. For this approach, see Alison Richard, *Primates in Nature* (New York: Freeman, 1985).

<sup>20</sup> For a thorough review of this model and its many offshoots, see Fedigan, *Primate Paradigms*.

<sup>21</sup> Nancy Tanner and Adrienne Zihlman, "Women in Evolution, Part 1: Innovation and Selection in Human Origins," *Signs* 1, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 585-608.

originally tended to reflect a more benign view, stressing the mother-infant pair and a more flexible, less hierarchical social structure. But many of the assumptions underlying the early use of ape and baboon behavioral data in models for hominid evolution were equivalent: ape and monkey behaviors were microcosms of human social behavior and political life.

Fedigan points out that the "baboonization" of protohominids became so common that by the early to mid-1970s not a single introductory text in human evolution omitted reference to it. As Rowell and other critics of this model stressed, many of the generalizations and assumptions about the functions of male dominance made by early baboon researchers like Washburn and DeVore were unsubstantiated by data from other research sites.<sup>22</sup> Rowell's studies of troop movement among forest baboons, for instance, indicated that the direction of daily foraging routes was determined by a core of mature females rather than by the dominant males. As feminist scholars such as Sandra Harding and Donna Haraway note, women primatologists often have had a different vision of group structure and behavior because they attended to female actors in a way that male primatologists did not.<sup>23</sup> This focus on female behavior in baboons and in a variety of other species became fuel for the critical deconstructions of the baboon model during the 1970s. In addition, a number of studies questioned the assumption that male dominance conferred a reproductive advantage on particular males, thus contributing to selection for male aggression.<sup>24</sup>

An article by psychologists Carol McGuinness and Karl Pribram illustrates a pervasive phenomenon of the second wave of primatology, the insertion of primatological data into structural-functionalist models for the evolution of gendered human behavior: "In all primate societies the division of labor by gender creates a highly stable social system, the dominant males controlling territorial boundaries and maintaining order among lesser males by containing and preventing their aggression, the females tending the young and forming alliances with other females. Human primates follow this same pattern so remarkably that it is not difficult to argue for biological bases for the type of social order that channels aggression to guard the territory which in turn maintains an equitable environment for the young."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Thelma Rowell, "The Concept of Dominance," *Behavioral Biology* 11 (1974): 131-54.

<sup>23</sup> Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986); Haraway, *Primate Visions*.

<sup>24</sup> Lynda Marie Fedigan, "Dominance and Reproductive Success in Primates," *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 26 (1983): 91-129.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in David Goldman, "Special Abilities of the Sexes: Do They Begin in the Brain?" *Psychology Today* 12, no. 6 (November 1978): 56.

McGuinness's and Pribram's interpretation appeared in *Psychology Today*, one of many popular journals publishing articles on human nature and its biological roots. Although the template here is the savanna baboon troop as described by Washburn and DeVore—and contested early in this period by Rowell and others who call into question all of the fundamental assumptions of the savanna model—"all primate species" collapsed the diversity and specificity of data on primates into a single category, "primate societies." Here, and in a plethora of popular books and articles published during this period, monkeys and apes were used explicitly as exemplars of earlier stages of human evolution. The ubiquitous primate ancestral group now occupied a position like that of "tribal societies" in the evolutionary schemas of nineteenth-century anthropologists. The diffusion of cultural relativism into all branches of modern social science had made it embarrassing and untenable to fit tribal groups into this early evolutionary slot. If "primitives" were to be considered our equals with complex and meaningful cultures, they could not also represent the protohuman past. In this new way of thinking, monkeys and apes became the early ancestral group from which human institutions could be seen to have evolved.

This replacement of human "primitives" by nonhuman primates also relates to global political events of the postwar period: "With the progressive disappearance of human 'primitives' as legitimate objects of knowledge and colonial rule, and with the discrediting of pre-war eugenics, Western anthropologists had to rethink the meaning and processes of the formation of 'man.'"<sup>26</sup> The substitution of primates for "primitives" thus neatly retained an important Western cosmological category for use in the era of decolonization and the construction of the Third World.

One consequence of this key insertion of the nonhuman primate in the Western symbolic niche for "primitive progenitor" was an implied obliteration of the border between human and nonhuman.<sup>27</sup> The passage by McGuinness and Pribram is a mass of terminological ambiguities. What is meant by terms such as "the division of labor" when referring to nonhuman primates? Does this term mean the same thing when applied to human groups? Monkeys and apes do not have a division of labor along gender lines as do human cultures; each animal performs subsistence tasks in approximately the same way as the others, consuming on the spot what is individually foraged. Human divisions of labor by sex are complex historical and socioeconomic phenomena embroidered with

<sup>26</sup> Haraway, *Primate Visions* (n. 1 above), 7.

<sup>27</sup> See Susan Sperling, *Animal Liberators: Research and Morality* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), for discussion of the relationship between primate ethnology and the current animal rights movement.

symbolic meanings unavailable to animals. But when DeVore and Hall wrote that "the baboon troop is organized around the dominance hierarchy of adult males," they meant it both literally and figuratively.<sup>28</sup> They perceived dominant males as "culturally" binding together a loose, potentially chaotic aggregate of females, subadult males, and young. In the same work, they offered a spatial schematization of primate societies, a series of concentric circles with the most dominant animals in the center. DeVore and Hall visualized male dominance as the cement of primate social organization.

Social anthropologist and popularizer Robin Fox is typical of the many writers who sought evolutionary legitimations of male dominance among humans in primate field studies. In *Biosocial Anthropology* (1975), Fox was quite explicit about his use of nonhuman primates as replacements for human "primitives":

Older theorists speculated on the "earliest conditions of man," and as we know debates raged between proponents of "primitive promiscuity" and "primitive monogamy." The former were usually seen as a prelude to "matriarchy" (now popular again) and the latter to "patriarchy." This has all been dismissed as ridiculous for well-known reasons. But I think we can now go back to the question in a different way. We know a great deal about primates which can tell us what is behaviorally available to our order in general and, therefore, what must have been available by way of a behavioral repertoire to our ancestors . . . "early man" then, in this sense, was less like modern man gone wild than like a primate tamed. *And even if we cannot deduce accurately the kinship systems of early man [sic] from those of the most primitive humans, we can do something better, we can distill the essence of kinship systems on the basis of comparative knowledge and find the elements of such systems that are logically, and hence in all probability chronologically, the "elementary forms of kinship."*<sup>29</sup>

The differences between Fox's assumptions and those of the Victorian evolutionists are negligible. Fox traced the evolution of human kinship through the primates, borrowing, as he admits, "somewhat recklessly from the jargon of social anthropology, descent and alliance."<sup>30</sup> According to his analysis, these two elements are present in nonhuman primate

<sup>28</sup> Irven DeVore and K. R. L. Hall, "Baboon Social Behavior," in *Primate Behavior. Field Studies of Monkeys and Apes*, ed. Irven DeVore (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 54.

<sup>29</sup> Robin Fox, *Biosocial Anthropology* (New York: Wiley, 1975), 11; emphasis mine.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

social systems but are combined only in human groups. He divides primate social systems into two types, single-male and multi-male groups, of which all have in common "a threefold division of the larger group into: a) adult males; b) females and young; c) peripheral males. We can look at any primate social system, including our own, in terms of the 'accommodations' made between these three blocks."<sup>31</sup> According to Fox, in single-male groups (gorillas and hamadryas baboons) the basic unit is the "polygenous family," while in the multi-male group (common baboons, chimpanzees), "if the sexual relationship is brief and unenduring, the consanguineal relationship is long lasting and of central importance."<sup>32</sup> The phylogenetic histories of different primates are thus collapsed into several categories with a certain internal consistency but little relationship to actual data. Once Fox raises the question of the relationship of complex human behaviors to nonhuman primate behavioral variation, his evidence becomes a confusing array of randomly chosen bits and pieces of behavior from species with varying phylogenetic relationships to one another and to humans. Although nodding briefly at the issue of variation, Fox goes on to the heart of his argument about nonhuman primates and human culture: "The real question is do the rules represent more than a 'labeling' procedure for behavior that would occur anyway? . . . If group A and B were called 'Eaglehawk' and 'Crow,' and the various lineages 'snake,' 'beaver,' 'bear,' and 'antelope,' etc., then a picture emerges of a proto-society on a clan moiety basis."<sup>33</sup> An important consequence of this approach is that it obscures many of the culturally unique aspects of human kinship, among them the widespread existence of putative kin among human cultures, that make it fundamentally different from social relations among nonhumans.

Examples of this missing link approach to the use of nonhuman primate behavior abound in the literature of this period, often focusing on gendered behavior and its presumed "functions." Many popularizations of this approach have had a wide audience.<sup>34</sup> In one such account, the sexologist and gerontologist Alex Comfort explained the presumed continual receptivity of human females: "At some point in primate evolution, the female became receptive all year round and even throughout pregnancy. This apparently trifling change in behavior was probably the trigger, or one of the triggers, which set off the evolution of man [*sic*].

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative: A Personal Inquiry into the Animal Origins of Property and Nations* (New York: Atheneum, 1966); Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967); Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, *The Imperial Animal* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971).

Between baboons and higher apes we find the effects of this change. Baboons behave very like other pack-living animals. Higher apes, with sexual activity continuing all the year round, and unrelated to heat, develop a heterosexual social life which is not confined to the coital encounter."<sup>35</sup> Comfort's order of ascent is baboon, ape, and human, and the characteristic "continual sexual receptivity" is traced along this ladder in much the same way that the Victorians associated "primitive promiscuity" with savages, group marriage with barbarians, and monogamy with civilized humans.

As we move up and down the phylogenetic scale, monkeys and apes are anthropomorphized, and behaviors of diverse species are used as simple analogues of human characteristics. Much of the second-wave scholarly and popular evolutionary writing that uses nonhuman primate models reproduces this logical failing. Selected examples of group structure, kinship, and dominance behavior in nonhuman primates are viewed as precursors of human social structure and behavior. The influence of these models on popular perceptions of the relationship of humans to animals and of the meanings of gender divisions has been profound.

Nonhuman primates became the missing link in the evolutionary models of the late 1960s and 1970s. But nonhuman primates are as unwieldy a link as were the "primitives" of the early evolutionists. All living species of organisms have undergone separate histories combining both evolutionary and chance events. There is immense variation in behavior among primate species, and cross-phyllum generalizations are hard to make. For instance, sexual behavior among monkeys and apes exhibits a wide variety of patterns that defy neat phylogenetic analysis. Monkeys display a variety of mating patterns, but the most telling data in this regard are from the apes.<sup>36</sup> There are significant differences between the sexual behavior of chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans that in no way relate to their phylogenetic closeness to humans. For instance, hormonal and behavioral states appear closely correlated in gorilla reproductive behavior, somewhat less so in chimps, and least of all in orangutans. But chimpanzees are much more closely related to humans than are orangutans. This finding contradicts the linear evolutionist's view that the closer a species' phylogenetic relationship to humans, the less its sexual behavior is hormonally controlled and the greater the resemblance to human reproductive behavior.

<sup>35</sup> Alex Comfort, *The Nature of Human Nature* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 13.

<sup>36</sup> Thelma Rowell, *The Social Behaviour of Monkeys* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972); Ronald Nadler, "Laboratory Research on the Sexual Behavior of the Great Apes," in *Reproductive Biology of the Great Apes*, ed. Charles E. Graham (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

**Sociobiology and the evolution of gendered behavior in primates**

The 1975 publication of *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* by Harvard entomologist Edward O. Wilson was a signal event for students of animal behavior in numerous disciplines.<sup>37</sup> Wilson makes two major assertions in *Sociobiology*: that all important social behaviors are genetically controlled and that natural selection of the genome is caused by a set of specific adaptive mechanisms (kin selection) that produce behaviors maximizing an organism's ability to contribute the greatest number of genes to the next generation. The historical roots of sociobiology lie in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century arguments about the level at which natural selection operates, that of the group or of the individual. Evolutionists like Darwin, Haldane, and Wynne-Edwards contended that traits may be selected because they are advantageous for populations.<sup>38</sup> In the 1960s, William Hamilton and Robert Trivers proposed that traits can be selected only at the individual level and that all social behaviors are tightly genetically controlled.<sup>39</sup>

Hamilton's theory of kin selection is based on the concept that the "fitness" of an organism has two components: "fitness" gained through the replication of its own genetic material by reproduction and "inclusive fitness" gained from the replication of copies of its own genes carried in others as a result of its actions. According to this theory, when an organism behaves altruistically toward related individuals, fitness benefits to kin also benefit the organism, but the actor's benefits are devalued by the coefficient of relatedness between actor and relatives. Thus, genes are viewed as being selected because they contribute to their own perpetuation, regardless of the organism of which they are a part. Trivers defined reciprocal altruism as behavior that appears to be altruistic but which, given mutual dependence in a group, may be selected if it confers indirect benefits on the altruist.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).

<sup>38</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1859); J. B. S. Haldane, *The Causes of Evolution* (London: Longmans, Green, 1932); V. C. Wynne-Edwards, *Animal Dispersion in Relation to Social Behaviour* (New York: Hafner, 1962).

<sup>39</sup> William D. Hamilton, "The Genetical Evolution of Social Behavior, Parts 1 and 2," *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 7 (1964): 1-52; Robert Trivers, "Parental Investment and Sexual Selection," in *Sexual Selection and the Descent of Man, 1871-1971*, ed. Bernard Campbell (Chicago: Aldine, 1972), 136-79.

<sup>40</sup> The roots of these arguments can be traced to the works of the evolutionists V. C. Wynne-Edwards, William D. Hamilton, and Robert Trivers. Altruism was defined as any behavior that benefits another organism, not closely related, while being apparently detrimental to the organism performing the behavior, benefit and detriment being defined in terms of their contributions to inclusive fitness. Examples of such altruistic behaviors might be sharing of food with nonrelatives and the aiding of nonrelatives in times of danger.



Wilson took the concept of kin selection and applied it to all animal and human behavior from the social insects to humans, suggesting that the social sciences and biological sciences be subsumed by sociobiology. It is not surprising that many scientists viewed the idea of their disciplines' cannibalistic incorporation into the body of sociobiology as an unsavory prospect. Some objected on political grounds to its explicit reductionism and potential for racist and sexist interpretations. The Boston-based collective Science for the People issued a critical attack on sociobiology, calling it another form of biological determinism like nineteenth-century eugenics and Social Darwinism.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, sociobiology began to establish a foothold in American and European departments of anthropology, zoology, and psychology. The American Anthropological Association sponsored a two-day symposium on sociobiology at its 1976 yearly meeting, and departments in the biological and social sciences began to offer seminars and classes on the topic. By the late 1980s, it had become the dominant paradigm among anthropological primatologists, replacing the structural-functionalist models of the second period of modern primatology.

I cannot here discuss the many reasons, from national political trends to individual departmental politics, for the ascendance of sociobiology over structural-functionalism in primate studies. Researchers studying proximate mechanisms, many of them socioecologists, continued to work at various sites with little interest or involvement in postulations of ultimate causality. Nevertheless, as structural-functionalism had earlier, sociobiology became the grand theory conveyed to social scientists interested in human evolution and widely popularized through newspaper and magazine articles and popular books.<sup>42</sup> By the mid-1980s, a number of important empirical critiques appeared, deconstructing the logic of sociobiological arguments. But these have yet to be widely circulated outside classes and seminars in evolutionary theory.

Early sociobiological views of the evolution of human gendered behaviors incorporated primatological data and viewed males and females as having differential reproductive strategies. Because of the presumably greater "investment" of female primates in infant rearing, female behaviors were viewed as selected because they advanced a female's chances of gaining male protection during vulnerable periods for herself and her offspring (offspring are seen as fleshy packets of shared genes). Females frequently were pictured as conservative, coy, and passive. By contrast, it behooved males to inseminate as many females as possible, thus forward-

<sup>41</sup> Sociobiology Study Group of Science for the People (n. 10 above).

<sup>42</sup> See Haraway, *Primate Visions* (n. 1 above), for a history of the actors involved in the demise of structural-functionalism and the ascendance of sociobiology.

ing their attempted genetic monopoly of the future. Wilson wrote: "It pays males to be aggressive, hasty, fickle and indiscriminating. In theory it is more profitable for females to be coy, to hold back until they can identify the male with the best genes. Human beings obey this biological principle faithfully."<sup>43</sup> DeVore and other sociobiologists have maintained that the sexual and romantic interest of middle-aged men in younger women and their presumed lack of interest in their female age cohort stem from selective pressures on male primates to inseminate as many fertile females as possible.<sup>44</sup>

Wilson applied sociobiological arguments to the meaning of the middle-class nuclear family in American culture:

The building block of nearly all human societies is the nuclear family. The populace of an American industrial city, no less than a band of hunter-gatherers in the Australian desert, is organized around this unit. In both cases the family moves between regional communities, maintaining complex ties with primary kin by means of visits (or telephone calls and letters) and the exchange of gifts. During the day the women and children remain in the residential area while the men forage for game or its symbolic equivalent in the form of money. The males cooperate in bands or deal with neighboring groups.<sup>45</sup>

It is no coincidence that sociobiology and the second wave of Western feminism were simultaneous occurrences. Early sociobiologists clearly envisioned their new model as "disproving" feminism. The sociobiologist Pierre Van den Berghe wrote: "Neither the National Organization for Women nor the Equal Rights Amendment will change the biological bedrock of asymmetrical parental investment."<sup>46</sup> Phillip Kitcher (1985) has commented on the sexism of many sociobiological arguments:

Sometimes the expression is tinged with regretful sympathy for ideals of social justice (Wilson), at other times with a zeal to *épater les féministes* (Van den Berghe). [I]t is far from clear that sociobiologists appreciate the political implications of the views they pro-

<sup>43</sup> Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).

<sup>44</sup> DeVore is an actor in the primatological drama who has made a smooth transition from the functionalist agendas of the 1960s to those of the 1980s. He was an important proponent of the use of the baboon troop as a functionalist's microcosm of human society and later became a strong advocate of sociobiology.

<sup>45</sup> Wilson, *Sociobiology*, 553.

<sup>46</sup> Pierre Van den Berghe, *Human Family Systems* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 2, quoted in Kitcher (n. 10 above), 5.

mulgate. These implications become clear when a *New York Times* series on equal rights for women concludes with a serious discussion of the limits that biology might set to women's aspirations, and when the new right in Britain and France announces its enthusiasm for the project of human sociobiology.<sup>47</sup>

More recently, a feminist discourse in sociobiology has shifted attention to the presumed gender-specific reproductive strategies of female primates. By stressing female variance, feminist sociobiologists assert that selection acts on females as well as males to encode genetic programs for enhanced fitness. The primatologist Sarah Hrdy, an important contributor to this literature, has lauded the emphasis in sociobiology on variance in reproductive success for contributing a bracing dose of feminism to primatology.<sup>48</sup> Thus, these researchers see female mate choice and female elicitation of male support and protection in rearing young as integral to the competitive strategies of females vis-à-vis other females.<sup>49</sup> They describe "prolonged female receptivity" in some nonhuman primates and human females as an evolved mechanism to manipulate male behavior. Variation in mothering styles and skills, and the degree of selfishness of caretakers, are said to reflect variance in reproductive interests that are sometimes at odds with those of offspring. They also describe (as kin-selection strategies) competition between females whenever fertility and the rearing of young are limited by access to resources and the competition of dominant females on behalf of their offspring by eliminating competitors or forestalling reproduction in the mothers of potential competitors: "Female primates have evolved to be fierce competitors and they are obsessed with signs of status differences or disrespect only when it pays off in terms of access to energy resources. . . . Female primates may compete sexually . . . they may harass other females, especially low-status ones, to such an extent that they are unable to conceive effectively, maintain gestation or adequately lactate. There are also scattered reports that females may kill and cannibalize the infants of low-status females, or seize them and 'aunt' them to death."<sup>50</sup>

This new view of females among academic sociobiologists is mirrored in popular journalism about primate infanticide and infant abuse and

<sup>47</sup> Kitcher, 6.

<sup>48</sup> Sarah B. Hrdy and George C. Williams, "Behavioral Biology and the Double Standard," in *Social Behavior of Female Vertebrates*, ed. Samuel K. Wasser (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 3-17.

<sup>49</sup> Sarah B. Hrdy, *The Woman That Never Evolved* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Jane B. Lancaster, introduction to *Female Primates: Studies by Women Primatologists*, ed. Meredith Small (New York: Liss, 1984), 1-12.

<sup>50</sup> Jane B. Lancaster, quoted in Small, ed., 1.

interfemale aggression and competition. Here, human females are portrayed as bearers of behavioral homologues from their nonhuman primate ancestors and early hominid past, predisposing them toward certain modes of interindividual competition, rather than as the passive and nurturant weaklings of some former functionalist models. In these newer accounts, female competition has taken center stage. It is tempting to blame journalists and science writers for these lurid images and their extension to human females, but that would be a mistake: the academic sociobiological model is clearly meant to apply across the primate order to humans. DeVore, for example, interprets soap operas to reflect his vision of female reproductive strategies:

Soap operas have a huge following among college students, and the female-female competition is blatant. The women on these shows use every single feminine wile. On the internationally popular soap *Dynasty*, for example, a divorcee sees her ex-husband's new wife riding a horse nearby. She knows the woman to be newly pregnant, so she shoots off a gun, which spooks the horse, which throws the young wife, and makes her miscarry. The divorcee's own children are living with their father and this woman; the divorcee doesn't want this new young thing to bring rival heirs into the world to compete with her children.

Whole industries turning out everything from lipstick to perfume to designer jeans are based on the existence of female competition. The business of courting and mating is after all, a negotiation process, in which each member of the pair is negotiating with those of the opposite sex to get the best deal possible, and to beat out the competition from one's own sex. . . . I get women in my class saying I'm stereotyping women, and I say sure, I'm stereotyping the ones who make lipstick a multibillion dollar industry. It's quite a few women. Basically, I appeal to students to look inside themselves: what are life's little dilemmas? When your roommate brings home a guy to whom you're extremely attracted, does it set up any sort of conflict in your mind?<sup>51</sup>

Many sociobiologists disclaim the reductionism of their popular interpreters; Wilson and Hrdy have both published statements about the importance of human cultural transmission and the possibility of change in human social relations caused by cultural factors.<sup>52</sup> This is disingen-

<sup>51</sup> Duncan M. Anderson, "The Delicate Sex: How Females Threaten, Starve, and Abuse One Another," *Science* 7, no. 3 (April 1986): 43-48.

<sup>52</sup> Wilson, *On Human Nature*, Hrdy.

uous; it has now become fashionable for both biological and environmental reductionists to claim interactionism as the only reasonable view and then to revert immediately to the reductionist theories that belie their assertions. In fact, academic sociobiologists draw the same conclusions as their journalistic interpreters.<sup>53</sup>

### What we know about gendered primate behavior

Scientists now criticize many former assertions about reliably differentiating behavioral dimorphisms across primate phyla as based on incomplete data.<sup>54</sup> The more we know about nonhuman primate behavior, the more examples of intraspecific and interspecific variety emerge. Several common functionalist assertions about gender differences now appear to be unsubstantiated. For instance, male monkeys and apes of a variety of different species have been described as more aggressive than conspecific females. Barbara B. Smuts, however, finds no consistent gender difference in frequencies of aggression in numerous primate species.<sup>55</sup> She focuses on the contextual factors influencing agonistic behaviors in both males and females, including how males and females influence each other, rather than positing inherent, genetically controlled behavioral dimorphisms.

Another recently challenged functionalist theory about nonhuman primates is that social dominance is highly correlated with reproductive success and that dominance behaviors have been selected over the phylogenetic histories of species. Irwin S. Bernstein, in reviewing data from numerous primate studies, suggests that there is little association between dominance rank and reproductive success.<sup>56</sup> Fedigan summarizes the whole era of reports on male copulations, mating success, consortship, and male dominance and concludes that none of the measures provides

<sup>53</sup> Oyama's *The Ontogeny of Information* (n. 7 above) discusses the many ways that biological reductionists hedge their bets by making sociobiological assertions about the different reproductive interests of the sexes but adding that cultural factors are "important for humans." As she points out, this is an additive model of human culture pinned onto the "primate biogram" (83).

<sup>54</sup> Irwin S. Bernstein, "The Evolution of Nonhuman Primate Social Behavior," *Genetica* 73 (1987): 99-116; Fedigan, "Dominance and Reproductive Success in Primates" (n. 24 above); Barbara B. Smuts, "Gender, Aggression, and Influence," in *Primate Societies*, ed. Barbara B. Smuts et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 400-412.

<sup>55</sup> Smuts's "Gender, Aggression, and Influence" is a very useful review of gender dimorphism in aggression. Her interpretations of baboon data in *Sex and Friendship in Baboons*, ed. Barbara B. Smuts (New York: Aldine, 1985), are generally consistent with the feminist sociobiology critiqued in this article.

<sup>56</sup> Bernstein, "The Evolution of Nonhuman Primate Behavior."

a convincing picture of dominant males monopolizing estrous females.<sup>57</sup> High levels of male aggression and wounding during the breeding season may have more to do with male mobility, "xenophobia," and rank instability among males during the breeding season than with fighting over females.<sup>58</sup>

Aggression, reproduction access, and dominance are emerging as more complex, variable, and context dependent and as less subject to generalizations easily applied cross-phyla. And not all primate species show a pattern of male protection from predators for females and young (their own or those of other males); indeed, many do not. Robert S. O. Harding and Dana K. Olson report that the vivid displays of male patas (a type of African monkey), long assumed to distract predators from females and young, who remained frozen in the grass, now appear to be associated with intermale competition during the breeding season.<sup>59</sup> To complicate the picture further, these large African cercopithecines were thought to live in exclusively single-male groups. In fact, it is now clear that patas females mate with a variety of males.

How can we generalize with any certainty about gendered behavior in nonhuman primates? We know that female primates conceive, gestate, and lactate, and that in most species it is the female primarily who nurtures the young (although nonhuman primate "nurturance" should not be confused with the cultural traditions with which this word is associated in human groups). Males inseminate females. There is little or no sexual division in subsistence labor among nonhuman primates, one fact among many others that makes them strikingly different from human beings. All nonhuman primates forage for themselves and there is little sharing of food, with a few exceptions, such as the occasional opportunistic hunting by some male chimps and baboons. In many, but not all, species of monkeys and apes, males are larger than females, more muscular, and have larger canines. Size dimorphism seems to be important in a number of species in giving priority of access to environmental incentives (such as desired grooming partners or preferred foods), but larger males by no means always dominate smaller females. Aggressive and affiliative behaviors of male and female primates vary depending on the species, social context, and individual. In fact, we are confronted with an enormous range of variations in intraspecific and interspecific behavior that defies neat classificatory schemas. Yet, rather than study the ontogeny of behaviors across the life span of individual animals, a daunt-

<sup>57</sup> Fedigan, "Dominance and Reproductive Success in Primates."

<sup>58</sup> Bernstein, "The Evolution of Nonhuman Primate Behavior."

<sup>59</sup> Robert S. O. Harding and Dana K. Olson, "Patterns of Mating among Male Patas Monkeys (*Erythrocebus patas*) in Kenya," *American Journal of Primatology* 11 (1986): 343-58.

ing task but one likely to yield some important clues about the development and maintenance of behaviors, many primatologists have generally continued to posit tidy ex post facto explanations about function.

### **Toward an epigenetic perspective on gendered primate behavior**

A recent and more refined discourse in evolutionary studies has suggested that important influences on the development of organisms cannot be explained by reductionist-adaptationist models.<sup>60</sup> Bernstein has noted the concentration on function rather than mechanism in the literature and points out that while functional consequences may influence genetic change in a population's future, they do not always reflect evolutionary history. The concept that evolution always produces ideal solutions ignores many other factors that may have had varying degrees of importance in a species' history: random processes, phylogenetic inertia, environmental change, and the random nature of mutation. The zoologist Hans Kummer noted: "Discussions of adaptiveness sometimes leave us with the impression that every trait observed in a species must by definition be ideally adaptive, whereas all we can say with certainty is that it must be tolerable, since it did not lead to extinction."<sup>61</sup>

Whether they propose masculinist or feminist arguments, both structural-functionalism and sociobiology commit the fallacy of affirming the consequent. In 1951 the ethologist Niko Tinbergen posed a set of questions for understanding the reason for the existence of a biological structure: (1) What were the immediate preceding events leading to changes producing the structure or behavior? (2) What are the consequences of the structure (its functions)? (3) What processes from conception to the present have influenced the attributes of the structure? and (4) What were the evolutionary selective pressures that influenced the genetic contributions to the structure? It is important to note that the second and fourth questions are separate: function is a future consequence; it is not the same as evolutionary history, because environments are not constant.<sup>62</sup> The first and third questions deal with proximal and developmental factors that bring about behaviors, levels of analysis often completely ignored by functionalists but likely to yield the most interesting developmental data on gendered behavior. Tinbergen's classic construction throws into relief the error of trying to answer all questions at

<sup>60</sup> Patrick Bateson, "Ontogeny of Behaviour," *British Medical Bulletin* 37, no. 2 (1981): 159-64; Fausto-Sterling (n. 6 above); Gould and Vrba (n. 9 above); Kitcher; Oyama.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Bernstein, "The Evolution of Nonhuman Primate Behavior," 101.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

the level of function alone, as so many of the grand theory builders in modern primatology have done, without explicating proximal cause and mechanism.<sup>63</sup>

Although linear functionalist agendas have prevailed in reconstructions of the evolution of human gendered behavior, views of what female and male monkeys and apes are doing, and why they are doing it, have changed considerably.<sup>64</sup> The new assertions of "feminist sociobiology" can be analyzed in the light of recent epistemological discourse in feminist theory. Haraway and others have contextualized primatology both historically and culturally; some compelling feminist deconstructions have viewed primatology as a mythic science of "good stories" and "bad stories." Primates are icons for us. They seem to live at the boundary of nature and culture, and, as Haraway has brilliantly elucidated, the ways they appear in current Western symbolism reflect the political and socio-economic discourses of the historical periods during which primate studies have developed as a discipline.<sup>65</sup> But postmodern feminist deconstructions of primatology have tended to avoid the issue of good science versus bad science in relationship to feminist goals.<sup>66</sup>

Sandra Harding's recent treatment of the "science question in feminism" provides a useful way to frame the epistemological issues raised when primatologists study the evolution of gendered behavior.<sup>67</sup> Harding discusses three feminist epistemologies, which she calls "feminist empiricism," "the feminist standpoint," and "feminist postmodernism." Feminist empiricism assumes that more women in science will create a less patriarchal agenda and that the selection of appropriate problems for inquiry will change as women become practitioners. Critics of the early androcentric foci of male primatological researchers have pointed out that their models were mascu-

<sup>63</sup> I am following Irwin S. Bernstein's use of Niko Tinbergen's construction of causality in behavior, as outlined in *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> The ascendancy of functionalist models in primate studies mirrors the debate over hierarchical vs. nonhierarchical models in interactionist theories in biology throughout the twentieth century. In many cases, the proponents of hierarchy have won out. For a discussion of this point, see Evelyn Fox Keller, *A Feeling for the Organism: The Life and Work of Barbara McClintock* (New York: Freeman, 1983).

<sup>65</sup> Haraway, *Primate Visions* (n. 1 above).

<sup>66</sup> Evelyn Fox Keller has made this point: "The intellectual danger resides in viewing science as pure social product; science then dissolves into ideology and objectivity loses all intrinsic meaning. In the resulting cultural relativism, any emancipatory function of modern science is negated, and the arbitration of truth recedes into the political domain. Against this background, the temptation arises for feminists to abandon their claim for representation in scientific culture and, in its place, to invite a return to a purely 'female' subjectivity, leaving rationality and objectivity in the male domain, dismissed as products of a purely male consciousness" (Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985], 113).

<sup>67</sup> Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (n. 23 above).



linist and have suggested correcting this by removing their biases and thus "fixing" the bad science involved in their construction.

As we have seen, many primatologists in the early 1970s showed the centrality of female agency. Early feminist critics exposed the androcentric bias of much former research, which focused on male agonistic behavior to the exclusion of other axes of social life in the baboon troop. A number of women primatologists sought to redress the masculinist models of the past by describing female roles and behaviors within the baboon troop and by privileging female behaviors as integral to troop structure.<sup>68</sup> The work of women primatologists on a multitude of species has given us a more balanced description of behavior by focusing on female animals and their interactions, showing that female primates are active and important to troop life.

As important as these feminist correctives are, an emphasis on female primates and female personnel does not challenge the functionalism that underlies much primatology of this period. Once these new data on female behavior were linked to functionalist models, they often suffered from the same empirical inadequacies as did the male-centered models, using adaptationist hypotheses in a way that seems to tell a better story for feminists but nevertheless ultimately defeats scientific goals.

In Sandra Harding's second epistemology, "the feminist standpoint," men's dominating role in science is seen as resulting in "partial and perverse" understandings (the subjugated position of women allowing for the possibility of a more complete vision). Women are disproportionately represented in the ranks of primatologists as compared to other areas of evolutionary studies. But the social experiences of women vary enormously according to class, race, and culture; and the social and economic privilege enjoyed by bourgeois women primatologists may itself produce perverse understandings. This is not a minor issue: professional male and female primatologists in the United States have come, almost without exception, from the white upper-middle or upper classes. Feminist primatologists from the economically privileged classes of the West have focused much energy on identifying and describing status roles of female primates. We do not know what primatological issues might emerge from scholars whose social experiences are radically different. For example, primatologists of a different class background might place less emphasis upon social dominance and more on the mutually supportive interactions of non-"alpha" monkeys and apes.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> For examples of this emphasis, see Small, ed. (n. 49 above).

<sup>69</sup> I do not mean to imply that a simple relationship exists between social position and ideology. But in aggregate the ideas of working-class and minority members have

Some primatologists have been slow to realize that the primates they studied were part of a changing Third World ecology and that opportunities must be created for human communities if nonhuman primates are to survive in the context of rapidly changing political economies. For example, the role of the poacher as entrepreneur and the need for viable alternatives for those who depend economically on poaching are rarely considered in primatological accounts. The naive conservatism of some primatologists and their supporters is evident in the *National Geographic* vision of the African apes: innocent hairy primates defended against Africans by the lone white women who study them.<sup>70</sup>

Sandra Harding's third epistemology, "feminist postmodernism," challenges many of the assumptions on which the first two are based. Like structuralism, semiotics, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis, feminist postmodernism "requires seeking a solidarity in our oppositions to the dangerous fiction of the naturalized, essentialized, uniquely 'human' (read 'manly') and to the distortion and exploitation perpetrated on behalf of this fiction."<sup>71</sup> Some of the most interesting critiques of evolutionary models have come from postmodernist deconstructionists who read primatology as text in order to reveal its cultural meanings.

Like practitioners of the recent "ethnography as text" deconstruction of cultural anthropology, a growing number of historians and sociologists of science have viewed the evolutionary models of primatologists as a series of myths, one replacing another, and contextualized them in relation to wider social and political issues. Haraway is the most important exemplar of this school. She writes in "Primatology Is Politics by Other Means": "But *values* seems an anemic word to convey the multiple strands of meaning woven into the bodies of monkeys and apes. So I prefer to say that the life and social sciences in general, and primatology in particular, are story-laden; these sciences are composed through complex, historically specific storytelling practices. Facts are theory-laden; theories are value-laden; values are story-laden. Therefore, facts are meaningful within stories."<sup>72</sup> Postmodernists have tended to see less sexist and more female-centered origin myths as good for feminism. Such perspectives have led firmly away from considerations of the role of biology in human behavior in favor of analysis of the textual content of evolutionary stories. But there are problems with this approach, for it is one thing to say that science is socially constructed but another to deny,

---

been little represented in primatology, whose practitioners tend to come from an elite homogeneous class background and to be white.

<sup>70</sup> Haraway, *Primate Visions*.

<sup>71</sup> Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*, 28.

<sup>72</sup> Haraway, *Primate Visions*.

as postmodernists have often done, that biology has a role in human evolution and behavior. Postmodernism leaves untouched the question of the relative worth of epistemologies in evolutionary science, because postmodernists tend to view all epistemologies as equally mythic social constructions.

Sandra Harding discusses the tensions inherent in each of these approaches and endorses a radical enterprise that considers not the "woman question" in science but, rather, the "science question" in feminism: she sees the elimination of masculine bias in science as requiring a "fundamental transformation of concepts, methods and interpretations; an examination of the very logic of scientific inquiry."<sup>73</sup> The movement away from linear functionalist models in primatology toward a more robust epigenetic vision of evolutionary biology fits squarely within this last enterprise. The resistance to this change is strong: the linear reductionism of the past is clean and orderly, whereas for many, the ambiguity of the kind of approach I am suggesting is often unbearably messy. Such an approach is also time-consuming; primates are long-lived species, and the research strategies necessary for a full explication of gendered behavior require life history studies, a difficult prospect within the current structure of academic science (in which most primatological data are acquired for doctoral dissertations during one or two field seasons).

Can there be a feminist evolutionary biology that does more than retell functionalist stories in a less sexist format? Although feminist functionalism has "told new stories" about male and female primates, the narrative logic of functionalist models of primate behavior is ultimately antithetical to feminist goals. It proposes a reductionist science of genetic essences of maleness and femaleness that does not explain the diversity observed in nature. An approach that looks at genetic and extragenetic factors in the origin, diversity, and persistence of gender dimorphic behavior is more useful, although more complicated and problematic, than reductionist-functionalist models.<sup>74</sup> Life history studies of primates, which view development from the perspective of both proximate and ultimate causality, are necessary to our future understanding of all aspects of behavior, including gendered behaviors.

<sup>73</sup> Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*, 108.

<sup>74</sup> In *A Feeling for the Organism* (n. 64 above), Fox Keller uses geneticist McClintock's radical interactionism as an example of this approach: "In lieu of the linear hierarchy described by the central dogma of molecular biology, in which the DNA encodes and transmits all instructions for the unfolding of a living cell, her research yielded a view of the DNA in delicate interaction with the cellular environment—an organismic view. Far more important than the genome as such (i.e., the DNA) is the 'overall organism.'" As she sees it, the genome functions "only in respect to the environment in which it is found." In this work, the program encoded by the DNA is itself subject to change (121).

Feminists in the social sciences have often turned away from a consideration of evolutionary biology because of their awareness of the dangers of its frequently reductionist paradigms. But a more robust and sophisticated primate ethology may have something to offer by elucidating developmental mechanisms that apply across primate phyla and by defining the important differences between human and nonhuman primates. Human gendered behavior involves uniquely human cultural, cognitive, and linguistic characteristics that appear to be recent developments in hominid evolution and that are not shared by other primates. Biological anthropologists can contribute to an understanding of human gendered behavior only by attending first to its historical, economic, and cultural causes. Without a sophisticated grasp of human social behavior, they have little to offer the social sciences by way of theorizing about biological "roots" of complex human behaviors.

Feminist theory is dependent on the larger intellectual ecology. Recent discourse in the social and biological sciences points out problems with normative studies that assume that behaviors are fixed dimorphisms to be measured in adulthood. Recent critiques in evolutionary theory challenge reductionist-adaptationist models that collapse variation into theories of male and female reproductive strategies. Primatologists must attend to these arguments as well as acknowledge that the human world has never existed before and that its conditions are constantly changing.<sup>75</sup> This fact sets important limitations on what we can know about human evolution from studies of monkeys and apes.

Ultimately, langurs in lipstick are not an improvement over baboons with briefcases: we must return them all to their natural environments. This mandates changes in research style involving description and coherent explanation of what actually happens during life-cycle development. With more sophisticated methodologies and more robust theoretical models, primatology may yet have something valuable to offer those of us interested in gendered human behavior.

*Social Science Division  
Chabot College*

<sup>75</sup> I am here paraphrasing Oyama (n. 7 above).

---

# Dancing Out the Difference: Cultural Imperialism and Ruth St. Denis's "Radha" of 1906

Jane Desmond

## Introduction

**A**N ANALYSIS of the mechanisms through which meaning is generated is central to any reevaluation of dance history and its canon. I will be arguing in this article for the application of poststructuralist theory to the writing of dance history and also for the wider opening of feminist scholarship to considerations of live performance.<sup>1</sup> Women's studies, although it has generated a great deal of scholarly writing on the social construction of gender and the visual and verbal representation of women in literature, visual arts, and the mass media, has yet to engage fully with the specific richness of performance. Study of performance can include not only historical analysis of visual representations, their construction and reception, but also consideration of the special case of construction of meaning through display of the body—a body that is at once "real" and "representational" as it exists in performance. If "the feminine" itself can be conceived of as a socially constituted masquerade, as Mary Ann Doane and others have noted, then an analysis of performance has wide potential application for work in feminist studies.<sup>2</sup>

My thanks to Jennifer Wicke and Virginia Domínguez for commenting on earlier drafts of this article and to Victoria Vandenberg for research assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Susan Leigh Foster's excellent *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986) is, as of this writing, the only extended treatment of dance history to draw on theories of semiotics and on the historiographic work of Hayden White to construct a new model for a poetics of dance. This work focuses on developing paradigms for approaching various types of choreography but does not make race, gender, or class central components of its analysis.

<sup>2</sup> See Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," *Screen* 23, nos. 3–4 (September/October 1982): 74–89, for a discussion of related concerns and references to relevant articles.

*Dance scholarship*

Although dance scholarship has expanded dramatically in the last fifteen years or so, it remains far behind related fields of arts criticism both in the amount of work and in the level of analysis. Within the bounds of traditional history and criticism, several excellent scholars have emerged in the last two decades,<sup>3</sup> but the discipline as a whole is still waging a battle for acceptance within the academy and remains relatively closed to current work in related fields such as literary theory. There are many reasons for this: as the most ephemeral of all the arts, dance leaves the fewest traces (most dances have not been recorded in any way), making historical reconstruction and analysis exceedingly difficult. And, because it deals most directly with the mute (and most often female) body, dance remains suspect in institutions of higher learning.

Most dance writing is still concerned with technical and artistic judgment, historical reconstruction, reportage, and description, or even social history; but deeper analyses of the ideological functions of dances as works of art are still relatively rare. Only in the last few years have dance critics and historians begun to consider issues that have engaged literary critics and feminist scholars for much more than a decade. Gender, while it may be noted, is rarely analyzed as a constitutive factor.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, we are still in the early stages of developing theoretical tools suitable for our object of investigation: the human body, most often the female body, moving in performance. I want to show how theoretical tools drawn from other disciplines can be adapted to dance criticism, as well as how any investigation of gender in dance must be linked to concurrent analysis of other markers of cultural otherness, such as race and class. I hope that in return the particular structure of dance as live performance will open new avenues of theoretical investigation, furthering development of current theories about perception, pleasure, and the mapping of meaning onto the gendered body.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., work by Marcia Siegel and Sally Banes such as Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theatre, 1962-1964* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983) and Marcia Siegel, *The Shapes of Change: Images of American Dance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> In the last few years, some exceptions have begun to appear. See Ann Daly's interesting work on gender and ballet in her "Classical Ballet: A Discourse of Difference," *Women and Performance* 3, no. 2, issue 6 (1987-88): 57-66; and Marianne Goldberg's discussion of gender in Martha Graham's work, "She Who Is Possessed No Longer Exists Outside," *Women and Performance* 3, no. 1, issue 5 (1986): 17-27. Suzanne Shelton's meticulously researched biography of Ruth St. Denis, *Divine Dancer* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), on which I will draw throughout this article, discusses sexuality as a factor in St. Denis's work but does not analyze it in detail. Neither does Foster's consideration of St. Denis, in which gender is noted.



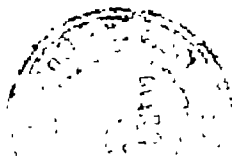
*Ruth St. Denis*

My object of analysis is an important 1906 piece, "Radha," choreographed and performed by Ruth St. Denis. St. Denis is usually presented as one of the major figures in the history of American dance, and she is always cited, along with Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan, as one of the three "mothers" of modern dance. Any reevaluation of the dance history canon must consider St. Denis's work.

With her husband, Ted Shawn, she started the Denishawn school of dance, one of the first professional schools of "aesthetic" dancing, in 1915, and toured throughout the country in the early decades of this century. Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Martha Graham, the leading choreographers of the next generation, all served an apprenticeship with Denishawn. St. Denis's work was seen on the vaudeville circuit (often the first professional aesthetic dancing that many Americans encountered) and was performed in elite theaters as well. The bulk of her repertoire, which she continued to perform well into the 1960s, consisted of dances inspired by ethnic styles ranging from American Indian to Japanese. The scale of the works varied from solo pieces to large spectacles. Denishawn dancers even appeared in D. W. Griffith's 1916 film, *Intolerance*. In the 1920s St. Denis's company toured Asia, presenting its orientalia to enthusiastic crowds. Although St. Denis's aesthetic was largely rejected as too decorative by Humphrey and Graham, and her works are not regularly performed today, her contribution to the rise of modern dance in America cannot be denied.

Most dance histories discuss St. Denis's "showmanship" and refer to her dances as part of the turn-of-the-century American passion for exotica.<sup>5</sup> But such observations do not take us deeply into the ideological structure and function of the work itself. While we can never imagine with certainty the meaning of an art work for a particular audience, we can venture an analysis of its structures of meaning. I will argue that by adapting contemporary insights drawn from literary criticism, film theory, and work on race and colonialism, we can come closer to understanding not only what "Radha" means, but how its range of meanings may be produced. I will argue that "Radha" presents a hyperbolization of categories of otherness, mapping markers of race,

<sup>5</sup> For works that discuss "Radha" as part of the general passion for the exotic at the turn of the century, see Elizabeth Kendall, *Where She Danced: The Birth of American Art Dance* (1979; reprint, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter, *Reformers and Visionaries: The Americanization of the Art of Dance* (New York: Dance Horizons Press, 1979); Christina L. Schlundt, "Into the Mystic with Miss Ruth," *Dance Perspectives*, no. 46 (Summer 1971). Foster and Shelton also situate the work in terms of exotica.



orientalism, and sexuality onto the white middle-class female body. Thus, "Radha" can be said to function as a site of condensation and displacement of desire.

### "Radha"

#### *Spectacle*

The dance opens and closes with visions of the Hindu goddess Radha posed in spiritual contemplation, partially hidden by a screen. The longest portion of the dance, however, consists of five variations celebrating the pleasures of the senses, and a whirling "delirium of the senses" episode that plunges the dancer into postorgasmic darkness. In both its theatrical structure and its visual arrangement on the stage, "Radha" is a spectacle displaying the female body (see fig. 1).

It is spectacular first in the sense of not being narrative. Although there is a thin story line to the dance, and it fits the barest requirements of narrative—stasis, disruption, stasis—the majority of stage time is devoted to the display of the body in a way that does not drive a narrative forward by providing new information or character development.<sup>6</sup> Second, the spectacular aspects of the dance are enhanced by an emphasis on surface decoration. The stage is set with soft amber lighting, wisps of incense, and an ornate backdrop (or—in a later version—a stage set) representing a Jain temple. St. Denis's costume, a short jacket and gauzy skirt, is accented with "jewels" and trimmed with shiny material. Flowers adorn her hair and jewelry her ankles and arms. Midriff and feet are bare. That a critic for *Variety* referred to the "semi-nudity of the woman" tells us how this costuming was perceived at the time.<sup>7</sup>

The choreography itself reiterated the decorative aspect of the design. As Suzanne Shelton notes, St. Denis believed that "each gesture and pose should objectify an inner emotional state," and "Radha" was conceived as "an elaborate network of spatial and gestural symbols" connoting such feeling states as rapture, despair, or inspiration.<sup>8</sup> Authorial intent aside, "Radha"—having been blocked out with saltcellars on the kitchen table—was a series of simple circular or square spatial patterns composed of relatively simple movements.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the relation of narrative and spectacle, see Laura Mulvey's breakthrough article, originally published in 1975, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," reprinted in her *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14–28.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Shelton, 54.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.



These movements were the turns and flourishes of the skirt dancer's repertoire mixed with a smattering of balletish steps and Delsartean limb movements. Never having studied Indian dance, St. Denis drew on the images of India available to her in books and punctuated her simple phrases with poses that recalled oriental icons and "popular images of the late Victorian era," such as the femme fatale.<sup>9</sup> Many of these poses were performed in profile, enhancing the two-dimensional quality of the figure-ground relationship. Radha, brought out of her ornate enclosure like a precious jewel, becomes a moving ornament against an elaborately decorated backdrop until, after displaying her valuable beauty, she is enclosed again, still tantalizingly visible but unattainable, within the carved fretwork of her diadem. Every aspect of staging can be seen as contributing to this fetishistic display. A closer look at the choreography will clarify the presentation.

*Description and close analysis*<sup>10</sup>

The curtain rises to reveal the goddess Radha sitting in the lotus position on a pedestal. (In later versions she is partially hidden from view behind an ornately carved screen, which will be opened by the head priest.) A procession of Brahman priests enters, carrying sacrificial offerings. (The priests were performed by Indian sailors and clerks rounded up for the purpose.)<sup>11</sup> When the priests are seated in a semicircle, framing a space for Radha to enter, she comes to life. Watched by her priests, she enters the sacred space to begin the dance of the five senses. In a progression from the senses of far distance to the more intimate ones (taste and touch), Radha dances to music from Delibes's orientalist opera, *Lakme*.

In the opening dance of sight, Radha holds a strand of pearls in each hand as she revolves in place. Then, in small steps phrased to the music, she moves from side to side in front of her watching priests, posing occasionally with one leg gently lifted to the front. Exchanging the pearls for bells, she begins the playful, rhythmic dance of hearing during which she surrounds her body with a cascade of sounds. Throbbing music initiates the dance of smell as Radha manipulates a garland of marigolds in a series of simple waltzing steps and poses. At the close of the section she arches back, trailing the blossoms along the front of her body, one

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> I rely on my viewing of a 1941 filmed version of St. Denis performing "Radha," a print of which is housed in the Dance Collection of the Lincoln Center Library, New York. I draw also on Shelton's verbal reconstruction of the dance, based on her viewing of the same film and supplemented by her review of St. Denis's papers housed at Lincoln Center.

<sup>11</sup> Kendall, 51.

hand crushing the flowers to her face. So far we have seen the dancer's body in association with nature and signs of luxurious ornamentation.

Things heat up for the dance of taste, which follows. Drinking deeply from a simple clay bowl, she whirls with abandon, ending in the seductive vulnerability of a deep back bend before she falls to the ground. Kneeling, with her skirt spread around her, she starts the dance of touch by caressing one hand with the other. Languorous music accompanies her movements as she slides her hands voluptuously over her body, ending with fingertips to her lips.

After the "foreplay" of the preceding episodes, the "delirium of the senses" section unfolds, the music quickening to a frenzied tempo. Spinning, possessed, Radha whirls with her skirts swishing wildly until she suddenly falls to the ground, and "writhes and trembles to a climax, then lies supine as darkness descends."<sup>12</sup> The lights come up on a chastened Radha, lifting her arms in supplication. After tracing the petals of a lotus blossom on the floor, she withdraws to her shrine. The final image shows her sitting on her pedestal, transformed by *samadhi*, self-realization.

### **Aesthetic dancing**

St. Denis's aesthetic dancing arose during a time of complex social change in America. At the turn of the twentieth century, changing gender roles joined with racial and ethnic differences and class antagonisms to create a volatile social mixture.<sup>13</sup> To contextualize St. Denis's work, I will consider two aspects of turn-of-the-century culture: changing social attitudes toward the body, and popularization of the "exotic" in cultural forms.

#### *American Delsarte movement*

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, a growing emphasis on "physical culture" was allied with a number of reform and educational movements, such as women's dress reform and physical education.<sup>14</sup> Prominent among these physical training regimes was the American Delsarte movement, based on the teachings of French music and drama teacher Francois Delsarte (1811–71). Seeking to analyze and classify human expression, he developed a technical training system based on "an elaborate and mystical science of aesthetics deriving from his personal

<sup>12</sup> Shelton (n. 4 above), 61.

<sup>13</sup> See John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890's," in his *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 73–102.

<sup>14</sup> Kendall (n. 5 above), 22.



**FIG 1** Ruth St. Denis in "Radha," 1906. (Photo reprinted by permission of Performing Arts Research Center, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, New York.)

interpretation of the Christian Trinity."<sup>15</sup> In the Delsarte system, the codification of gesture was linked to "a spiritual labeling of every part of the body according to certain zones—Head, Heart, and Lower Limbs, which corresponded to Mind, Soul, Life."<sup>16</sup>

Although intended for the elocutionary training of professional speakers and actors in the 1870s, the expressive principles of Delsarte's aesthetic theory were being practiced throughout the United States by the late 1880s, especially by women, in the drawing rooms of middle- and upper-class households. American proponents of Delsartism stressed relaxation techniques, "energizing" exercises, rhythmic gymnastics, "natural" movement based on spiraling curves, statue-posing, and pantomime. Statue-posing and pantomime were deemed "the ultimate in refinement and gentility" and helped open a "wedge for the entrance of respectable women into the field of theatrical dance" at a time when the theater was regarded in the United States as morally suspect.<sup>17</sup>

Through Delsarte, movement was analyzed and linked to meaning and morality. "Natural" movement was thought to provide authenticity of expression. The body became a signifier of Truth. Writing in 1954 about the Delsarte system, Ted Shawn, St. Denis's lifelong partner, states, "The spontaneous movements of the body cannot lie . . . all human beings move under the government of universal laws, and gesture is the universal language by which we can speak to each other with immediacy, clarity, and truth, and which no barrier of race, nationality, language, religion or political belief can diminish in communicative power."<sup>18</sup>

The changes in American society at the turn of the century coincided with massive colonial expansion in which Europe consolidated control of most of what is now known as the Third World. During this time, a popular and elite fascination with non-European cultures coincided with a rise in such "sciences" of codification as ethnography. The "exotic" was extremely fashionable in scholarly endeavors as well as "high" art and "low" art forms.

In some high art contexts, the exotic was cast as a utopian vision of the past glories of classical civilizations. The past seemed to offer an antidote to the chaotic urban conditions that threatened the middle and upper classes. At the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, the monumental White City, built in neoclassical style, typified this urge in elite cultural production.<sup>19</sup> Popular images of the exotic, however, were less utopian

<sup>15</sup> Ruyter (n. 5 above), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Kendall, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Ruyter, 29.

<sup>18</sup> Ted Shawn, *Every Little Movement: A Book about Francois Delsarte* (New York: Dance Horizons Press, 1963), 90.

and were perceived by the cultural elite as merely gratifying the senses rather than providing spiritual uplift. For example, historian John Kasson describes the exposition's Midway as "exuberant chaos," and a "hurly-burly of exotic attractions: mosques and pagodas, Viennese streets and Turkish bazaars, South Sea Island huts, Irish and German castles, and Indian tepees."<sup>20</sup> A prime attraction was the Persian Palace of Eros where Little Egypt and her cohorts danced the hootchy-kootchy. Described at the time as a "suggestively lascivious contorting of the abdominal muscles" that was "almost shockingly disgusting," this attraction proved immensely popular.<sup>21</sup>

Exotic popular amusements like the Midway and Luna Park on Coney Island, which attracted both middle- and working-class patrons, supplied an ornate aesthetic that Kasson has termed the "oriental orgasmic." The essentialist strains of Delsartism and orientalism mixed well. St. Denis's achievement in "Radha" was to combine the oriental orgasmic with Delsartism's transcendent spirituality into a spectacular form that could play successfully not only on the vaudeville circuit but also at the garden parties of the elite and in the art theaters of America and Europe.

### *Ruth St. Denis and "Radha"*

The multiple strains of orientalism, popular culture, and artistic spiritualism that are found in St. Denis's work have their beginnings in her childhood. The daughter of a well-educated progressive mother, she was drilled in Delsarte exercises and exposed to Eastern spiritualism through theosophy and through the orientalist performance of leading American Delsarte exponent Genevieve Stebbins. As a young adult, St. Denis became a believer in Christian Science, and throughout her career she combined the spirituality of the Delsarte system with her own adaptations of Christian Science teachings, which emphasized that "spirit is the immortal truth; matter is mortal error."<sup>22</sup>

Some scholars have seen a feminist dimension in Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy, because it asserts the androgynous nature of God. In the social sphere, this concept means that in order to be complete persons, both men and women had to have "a harmonious balance of masculine and feminine traits."<sup>23</sup> But equally important to

<sup>19</sup> John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, quoted in Shelton (n. 4 above), 47.

<sup>23</sup> Margery Fox, "Protest in Piety: Christian Science Revivited," *International Journal of Women's Studies* 1, no. 4 (July/August, 1978): 411.

Christian Science were notions of morality that promoted "purity" and chastity.<sup>24</sup> Inheriting the traditional Christian dualism between the spiritual and material realms, Christian Science did away with the hierarchy of that dualism by denying the material world altogether, subsuming it into a monism of Spirit. As Susan Hill Lindley has argued, the feminism of Christian Science was "ambiguous," and Eddy's resolution of this dualism that traditionally denigrated both women and the material "was no real solution to the tension, for it denied rather than redeemed the 'lost half.'"<sup>25</sup>

But, the spiritualism of Christian Science combined with the Delsarte system, which allowed women a new freedom of expression through movement, may have provided St. Denis a way "around" the strictures associated with the body's materiality and sensuality. While building a career on her own physical display, she steadfastly asserted her identity as a mystic and her dancing as spiritual uplift. In a poem titled "White Jade" describing an early dance of the same name, St. Denis writes, "My own body is the living Temple of all Gods. The God of Truth is in my upright spine. The God of Love is in the Heart's rhythmic beating. The God of Wisdom lives in my conceiving mind . . . . The God of Beauty is revealed in my harmonious body."<sup>26</sup> In this rhetorical fiat, the material body is not so much denied as transposed into the figuration of transcendental values.

Through her dance, St. Denis declared that she was presenting the mystic's experience of unity with God. In preparation for each performance of "Radha," St. Denis writes, she would meditate for half an hour to "realize my contact with the one Mind," so that by the time she stepped onstage, she felt she "was truly the priestess in the temple."<sup>27</sup>

Just as in Christian Science the body was subsumed into Spirit, St. Denis subsumed the sensual aspects of her dancing into a vaunted mysticism framed both as religion and as art. In doing so she, like her contemporary Isadora Duncan, was able to extend the bounds of propriety in the public display of the partially clothed female body. At a time when bare feet were cause for shock, St. Denis in her revealing costume earned reviews declaring, "Every lascivious thought flees shy into the farthest corner . . . . [She has] freed our souls from the clutches of everyday life."<sup>28</sup>

St. Denis's dancing was not always so uplifting. With the support of her mother, who accompanied her to New York, she got her start at the

<sup>24</sup> Susan Hill Lindley, "The Ambiguous Feminism of Mary Baker Eddy," *Journal of Religion* 64, no. 3 (July 1984): 326.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>26</sup> St. Denis quoted in Schlundt (n. 5 above), 24.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

age of fifteen as a skirt dancer in a dime museum variety show. Surrounded by specimens like triple-headed calves, she danced six shows a day, punctuating her routines with acrobatic roll-overs and her specialty, the slow-splits. On the bill with St. Denis one week in 1894 were an albino musician and Lillie the Trick Dog. This may not seem an auspicious start for a dancer who was later to be hailed as the solution to "the world's enigma," but it provided the basis for an artistic savvy that "aspired to the loftier echelons of fine art" while never losing the "genius of lowbrow."<sup>29</sup>

The myth surrounding St. Denis's first moment of choreographic revelation combines mass consumer culture with the spiritual aspirations assigned to high art. In 1904, while on tour in a David Belasco production of *DuBarry*, St. Denis was struck by a drugstore poster advertising Egyptian Deities cigarettes: the bare-breasted goddess Isis sat surrounded by huge columns and flowering lotus. An inscription carved in stone above her head assured the buyer that "No Better Turkish Cigarette Can Be Made." St. Denis later wrote, "My destiny as a dancer had sprung alive in that moment. I would become a rhythmic and impersonal instrument of spiritual revelation. . . . I have never before known such an inward shock of rapture."<sup>30</sup>

In dance histories, this incident is usually repeated and valorized as a moment of artistic inspiration. What should be noted, however, is how it reveals the forces of commodification, appropriation of the exotic, rapturous denial of the physical in favor of the spiritual, and display of the female body as a site of revelation that were to mark St. Denis's work throughout her career. All of these are exemplified in "Radha."

The dance ("Egypta") that the poster inspired was not completed until several years later, but the idea of an Eastern goddess was transposed into an Indian setting for "Radha," which catapulted St. Denis into the artistic circles of the cultural elite. First publicly performed in 1906, "Radha" played in New York at Proctor's vaudeville house on Twenty-third Street,<sup>31</sup> with St. Denis appearing between acts by a pugilist and a group of trained monkeys.<sup>32</sup> Soon, however, a New York socialite and oriental

<sup>29</sup> Shelton, 67, 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>31</sup> Vaudeville at this time reflected both its "coarser" origins in variety shows for male audiences and its newer respectability as it targeted a growing middle-class (male and female) audience. St. Denis's work, a respectable presentation of sexuality, fit well with changing codes of performance. Shelton (n. 4 above) notes: "As ladies began to patronize high-class variety, the atmosphere of the theater became even more self-conscious, with elaborate rationales required to justify the display of female bodies. Scantly clad women appeared as 'living statues' or in tableaux that duplicated famous paintings or biblical episodes" (25).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

enthusiast, Mrs. Orland Rowland, took an interest in St. Denis's work and arranged a private matinee for her society friends. "Radha" became a hit. Newspaper notices assured her success with headlines such as "Yes, Society Did Gasp When Radha in Incense-Laden Air 'Threw Off the Bondage of the Earthly Senses,'" and hundreds of eager spectators were turned away from subsequent performances.<sup>33</sup> St. Denis was launched on the high art circuit and soon found an influential supporter in Stanford White, but her work never lost its cross-class appeal. Lean times periodically sent her back to vaudeville to finance her work.

By thus contextualizing "Radha" in terms of the popularity of exotica at the turn of the century, the rise of "barefoot dancing," and various strains of spiritualism, I have touched on issues of gender, orientalism, and changing representations of women. Many dance historians stop their analysis at this point. But I still want to consider in detail the ideologies of these various discourses and their mode of activation in the construction of "Radha."

### "Orientalism"

Edward Said defines "orientalism" as "a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them')."<sup>34</sup> Through an act of "imaginative geography,"<sup>35</sup> it both created and then served the maintenance of the two worlds. It articulates a "relationship of power, of domination, and of varying degrees of cultural hegemony."<sup>36</sup> "Orientalism" in Said's usage refers not only to the changing political-historical relations between Europe and Asia but also to the discovery and study of various oriental cultures by Westerners and to a body of assumptions, images, and fantasies held by Westerners about the Orient.<sup>37</sup> It is this latter category that is my concern here. Although Said traces historical changes in the specific constitution of these images and fantasies, he maintains that a pervasive "latent Orientalism," circulating both inside and outside of scholarly disciplines, has remained remarkably consistent for several hundred years.<sup>38</sup>

Above all, the Orient is conceived of as unchanging and eternal. Occasionally these characteristics are valorized as "seminal" and "pro-

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 43.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.



found," as in reference to "the wisdom of the East."<sup>39</sup> Yet, most of the attributes assigned to the Orient are opposite to those valorized in the West. The East is primitive, childlike, and backward; it is eccentric, irrational, chaotic, and mysterious; it is sensual, sexual, fecund, and despotic. Most important, the Orient is deemed incapable of speaking for itself. It is not Europe's "interlocutor, but its silent Other."<sup>40</sup> The Western orientalist, as artist or scholar, "makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West."<sup>41</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the East was clearly constructed as a site requiring explication, investigation, illustration, discipline, reconstruction, or redemption.<sup>42</sup> The East's otherness offended European standards of sexual propriety, threatened domestic seamliness, and "wore away Eastern discreteness and rationality of time, space, and personal identity. In the Orient, one was suddenly confronted with unimaginable antiquity, inhuman beauty, boundless distance."<sup>43</sup>

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, the "unchanging" nature of the East was seen as a source of regeneration for a Western world caught in an unsettling rise of industrialism and materialism.<sup>44</sup> Said has characterized this idea of regeneration as a secular post-Enlightenment myth based on Christian imagery of death and rebirth through salvation.<sup>45</sup> In "Radha," St. Denis acts out a similar scenario of redemption within the imaginative geography of the Orient.

Following Said, we could thus look at "Radha," with its cresting tide of physical excitement overcome by spiritual purification, as illustrating the threatening chaotic sensuality of the East and its ultimate discipline and redemption through the triumph of spirituality or the law of ultimate truth. From this point of view, "Radha" projects a vision of the East as a site of imaginary pilgrimage both for sensual indulgence and physical

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 40, 206.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>44</sup> Notions of regeneration were not limited to the West. Said notes that in view of the conditions under colonialism, the Western "Orientalist found it his duty to rescue some portion of a lost, past classical Oriental grandeur" (ibid., 29) in order to ameliorate conditions in the present. In other words, the Westerner could now represent the Orient as it was, is, or should be, not only to himself but also to the Orientals, restoring to them glimpses of their past glories. St. Denis participated in this process when she toured the Orient in 1925-26. Her dances, constructed primarily from library research and from inspiring pictures, were warmly received in India, Japan, and other countries. In India, her respectability may have contributed to a renewal of prestige for traditional classical dancing. However, as one critic noted (see Shelton [n. 4 above], 199), there may have been some irony in the situation for the Indian audiences as they watched a white woman dance a temple dance that was, at the time, usually performed by prostitutes.

<sup>45</sup> Said (n. 34 above), 115.

awakening (the same notion later popularized in E. M. Forster's *Passage to India*, e.g.) and for spiritual rejuvenation of an America in the throes of change.

But if "Radha" is "about" the East, it is even more about the West. As James Clifford has noted in his criticism of Said's book, Said's argument at times suffers too much from the dichotomy we/they he attempts to describe.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Western discourse about "the East" reflects a continually changing historical process of self-definition by "the West." We can see "Radha" as a portrayal of Western desires and ambivalences displaced onto an orientalized, gendered body. The association between the cultural otherness of the Orient and the construction of gender in the West is the key to this linkage.

### **Orientalism and the otherness of gender and race**

As a site of unlimited desire and deep generative energies, the Orient is figured as female.<sup>47</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha describes the construction of the feminine in Western culture in practically the same language Said uses in depicting the Orient. "Woman," she says, "can never be defined. . . . She wallows in night, disorder, immanence, and is at the same time the 'disturbing factor (between men)' and the key to the beyond."<sup>48</sup>

Both "woman" and "the East" are constructed by Western patriarchy as "natural" categories of difference requiring explication, investigation, illustration, discipline, reconstruction, or redemption. Knowledge of both is eroticized as a stripping bare, an exposing of hidden meaning. The vocabulary itself reveals a scopic economy of difference in which the act of seeing is equated with mastery. As Said notes, a recurrent motif in nineteenth-century writing is the "vision of the Orient as spectacle, or tableau vivant."<sup>49</sup> That both the Orient and woman are cast as speechless renders self-narrative and history impossible and creates the necessary conditions for visual spectacle as site or source of knowledge. These double specular economies of difference come together in St. Denis's performance of "Radha." Here the mute colonized female body represents the sensuality of both the "female" and the Orient. Similarly, the higher spirituality attached to the "wisdom of the East" meets current notions of the women's sphere as the province of moral guardianship.

<sup>46</sup> James Clifford, "On Orientalism," in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, ed. James Clifford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 255-76.

<sup>47</sup> Said, 188.

<sup>48</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Difference: 'A Special Third World Women Issue,'" *Discourse* 8 (Fall-Winter 1986-87): 30.

<sup>49</sup> Said, 158.

"Radha" is thus doubly sexualized and doubly chaste. The tensions between these seemingly incommensurable attributes—goddess/whore, Eastern/Western, and sexual/chaste—are all articulated across the material presence of the female body. The dance signals the underlying dialectical relation of opposites in any binary construction. It also points to the changing dimensions of women's roles at the turn of the century and the reconstruction of female physicality as it was reflected in the health reform movement.

Freud's description of woman's sexuality as the dark continent reminds us of the intimate relationship among orientalism, gender, and a third register of otherness: race. In discussing this phrase, Sander Gilman asserts that Freud "ties the image of female sexuality to the image of the colonial black and to the perceived relationship between the female's ascribed sexuality and the Other's exoticism and pathology."<sup>50</sup> The reason Freud's statement was legible to his contemporaries is that, like female sexuality and the imaginative geography of colonialism, the "dark races" were represented as objects to be illuminated, mapped, and controlled.

Early nineteenth-century race theory<sup>51</sup> joined with social Darwinism in the latter half of the century to provide intellectual currency for white ideas about the biological basis of racial inequality.<sup>52</sup> Like gender, the concept of race entailed notions of difference that were seen as irreducibly linked to the body and, therefore, as "natural." Both women and nonwhites were thus consigned to the "lower" realm of nature. The same dynamic of dominance based on natural difference that was exemplified in white colonialism also undergirds patriarchy.

### Reading "Radha"

In "Radha" I find a construction of meaning that depends on manipulating these codes of difference into an overlapping structure. Race, gender, and cultural otherness double one another, with each register reinforcing the next to produce a hyperbole of "Otherness." Dancing, as a nonverbal display of the body—most often the female body—provides an especially rich mode of articulation for this process.

<sup>50</sup> Sander Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," in *"Race," Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 257.

<sup>51</sup> Race theories proposed a division of races into advanced (white) and backward (nonwhite) categories, just as orientalist thought divided the world into the strong, progressive, advanced West and the weak, primitive, degenerate East. Colonial expansion was seen as proof of the triumph of the fittest.

<sup>52</sup> Said, 206.

As I have noted in the preceding discussion, orientalist thought has constructed the East as feminine. Racial thinking has similarly tied otherness to the body. Display of the "colored" Eastern female body then carries with it a surplus of signifiers of difference. The litany of difference can be summarized as sexual (i.e., desirable yet terrifying), mute, natural, essential, universal, unchanging, and visually knowable. The female body is the nodal point that interpolates racial and cultural difference in "Radha." Its investigation is also the main content of the dance and the vehicle for spectacle.

### *Mechanisms of meaning*

The structure of this dance reveals the spectacle of a woman lost in a rising tide of self-pleasure, a goddess delirious with her own sexuality. It shows a woman renouncing, of her own accord, the powerful pleasure of her own body for a chaste spiritual union with the transcendent. It shows the careful marking out and celebration of each aspect of a woman's physicality, her five senses explored one by one moving in sequence, so that the spectator is drawn into an ever more intimate relationship with her body. This spectacle is displayed in front of a semicircle of male viewers on stage and equally directed outward to the audience.

When it is described in this way, the scopophilic aspects of the piece become apparent. Drawing on psychoanalytic film theories of spectatorship and voyeurism, I maintain that the woman's body is fragmented and fetishized, not only visually but conceptually, into each of the five senses—the woman is the five senses, each displayed separately for investigation by the viewer.<sup>53</sup> The woman, observed "unawares" by the audience in the darkened theater, is caught in a vortex of pleasure. She is further situated as object of the male gaze through the relayed looks of the priests on stage. Their presence also signals the religiosity of the act. (Being priests, they provide no competition for a white heterosexual male viewer in the audience but do provide adequate gender identification.)

At first glance, it appears that any displeasure that may be aroused in a male viewer by the woman's ability to sexually satisfy herself is soon banished by the reassurance that she rejects her own pleasure/power for spiritual fulfillment. The potential terror of female sexuality would thus

<sup>53</sup> Laura Mulvey's article (n. 6 above), remains a cornerstone for psychoanalytic critical theories of spectatorship in film. She draws on Lacan's extension of Freud's work on ego formation and the construction of sexual subjectivity to develop a theory of visual pleasure based on voyeurism and fetishism. Her work opposes notions of the social construction of the female as spectacle, i.e., "to-be-looked-at" to that of the male as active narrative agent. These ideas have important implications for developing a related theory of spectatorship for live performance. Following Mulvey, I believe that staging "Radha" as a spectacle (see "Spectacle" section under "Radha," above) enhances the voyeuristic and fetishistic production of pleasure.

be constrained by the patriarchal law of the Father in the form of religion, which would demonstrate the control that orientals, women, and all people of color were seen as requiring. However, the dance also unites the goddess/whore duality within the figure of one woman, thus allowing for several possible readings. One reading reassures the male viewer that even "asexual" women are really "women," that is, defined by and reducible to their bodies. Other readings might hold that women themselves are repositories of both relationships to sexuality, indulgence, and control; or that woman's pleasure in her own body is so seductive as to involve a constant struggle between expression and renunciation; or even that the pleasure of the senses is itself a transcendent spiritual experience. That is, the recuperative effect of the religious framing remains ambiguous, allowing for multiple responses.

Scophilic pleasures of this sort are allowed in high art under certain conditions. St. Denis's contemporary, the Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal, characterized this requirement when he stated that, although "Radha" "borders on voluptuousness, . . . it is chaste."<sup>54</sup> The mechanism that allows this audience/performer link can be described as what Michel Foucault calls the "confessional" mode.

### *The pleasures of the confessional mode*

One way of looking at the dynamics of meaning in "Radha," with its religious discourse, is in the form of a Christian confessional. The confessional structure is a ritual expression, a truthful telling of forbidden behavior, especially—as Foucault emphasizes in *The History of Sexuality*—sexual behavior. It requires a speaker and listener (performer and audience).<sup>55</sup> The act of telling "exonerates, redeems, and purifies" the confessor, and promises him or her salvation.<sup>56</sup> Its redemptive promise simultaneously allows, while disavowing, the illicit pleasures of prurient interest on the part of the audience.

Foucault indicates how the range of the confessional form expanded after the Reformation. By the end of the nineteenth century this range extended into a series of relationships, including those between psychiatrists and patients and delinquents and experts, and it also took several rhetorical forms such as autobiographical narratives and published letters.<sup>57</sup> I would add to this list the relationship between Radha and her audience as it functioned in performance. It was the supposed moral superiority of the viewing audience that was being played to and rein-

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Shelton (n. 4 above), 47.

<sup>55</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Random House, 1987), 61.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

forced in Radha's display and renunciation of the pleasures of her own body. Linda Nochlin has, in her discussion of orientalist painting, called this type of viewing experience a "tongue-clicking and lip-smacking response."<sup>58</sup>

The confessional mode interlocked with St. Denis's own way of conceiving of her work. St. Denis's belief in the Delsartean meaningfulness of movement, and her conviction that her dancing demonstrated the unity of the individual spirit with god (formulated in Christian Science as androgynous, or beyond sexuality), framed her work in moral justification. The confessional mode, as a way of structuring a relationship between performer and spectator, framed sexuality as art and art as moral uplift. Given St. Denis's position as a woman choreographer, then a rarity, I believe that her utilization of these discourses of morality enabled her to subvert the contemporary standards for "respectable" women's display of their own sexuality. In doing so, however, she also reproduced traditional patriarchal designations of that sexuality.

The tensions between the sexuality of the work and its artistic and spiritual framing are reflected in the contemporary critical response. Von Hofmannsthal captured the crux of the dance: "It is consecrated to the senses, but it is higher." Similarly, a British critic called "Radha" athletic in its actuality and ascetic in its refinement. The reviewer for the *Boston Herald* could not help noting that St. Denis's "body is that of a woman divinely planned" but insisted that "there is no atmosphere of sex about her."<sup>59</sup>

Foucault's work can take us farther in a consideration of sexuality and spectatorship. Foucault points out the similarity between two modes of production of truth, the confessional and the scientific discourse.<sup>60</sup> Both were utilized in the expanding nineteenth-century discourses of sexuality, and both implied a will to knowledge that reflected a socially inscribed power to investigate, to judge, and ultimately to reform or punish. In "Radha," both of these discourses come together. The ethnographic urge to represent the other for the pleasure and uses of the representer<sup>61</sup> combines with the display of sexuality sanctified by the confessional

<sup>58</sup> Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *Art in America* 71, no. 5 (May 1983): 125.

<sup>59</sup> Quotes from Shelton, 64. Note also that Shelton, who calls "Radha" a "ritual orgasm," acknowledges the mixed message in the piece and its oriental eroticism. But in her discussion of these qualities she merely states, "This mixed message stemmed from St. Denis' own stage personality and, by extension from the quality of the gestures," which reflected her background as an unassuming New Jersey farm girl (64-65). The intricate dialectic between East and West remains submerged in a discussion of individual artistry.

<sup>60</sup> Foucault, 64.

<sup>61</sup> Houston A. Baker, Jr., "Caliban's Triple Play," in Gates, ed. (n. 50 above), 386.

code. The result for the audience is a doubly inscribed "right to look," further enhanced by racial ideologies.<sup>62</sup>

In white Western discourse, both nonwhites and non-Westerners are coded as extremely or excessively sexual. The dark (St. Denis used dark body paint in the first versions) goddess from the erotic East, then, implies a surfeit of sexuality. Even when St. Denis switched to a body suit of her own flesh color in later versions, either for reasons of propriety or merely for convenience, she was still perceived as a Hindu goddess, and we know that at that time in North America, Hindus were perceived as black. In one of the first performances, when a Hindu first entered carrying a tray of incense, an audience member jeered in black dialect, "Who wants de Waitah?"<sup>63</sup> The racial implication was so clear that the company did not tour south of the Mason-Dixon line because of the Jim Crow laws.

St. Denis was, of course, known by her audience to be white. Her portrayal of a woman of color had the effect of sexualizing her in the audience's mind. This is similar to the device used in nineteenth-century odalisque paintings where the association of black women with whites served as a clue to the sexual knowledge or availability of the white women.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, while St. Denis is Western, she is here linked to the sensuous, eternal feminine represented by the East.

These several dynamics function to enhance the audience's right to look sexually at the respectable white middle-class woman on the stage.<sup>65</sup> The racial and cultural displacement of "Radha" is precisely what enhances the success of the confessional mode in the context of art. It is this hyperbole of otherness and its reinforcing linkages between ideological notions of race, gender, and non-Westernness that, I suspect, was the key to this dance's popularity.

## Conclusions

But if we leave the analysis at that, we fail to consider fully the dynamics of live performance. After all, the representation of Radha is not

<sup>62</sup> I am using the term "right to look" as it is developed by Jane Gaines in her "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory," *Cultural Critique* 4 (Fall 1986): 59–79. She refers to culturally proscribed economies of vision as they are delineated along lines of race, gender, and class.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Shelton, 54.

<sup>64</sup> Gilman (n. 50 above), 240.

<sup>65</sup> The class alignment or conignment of successful performers during that time was complex. "Respectable" artists often socialized with the elite, yet remained a class apart, somewhat beyond the pale. In terms of her class origins, St. Denis came from a family relatively poor in economic capital, but rich in educational capital (to use Bourdieu's distinction). Her mother was trained as a doctor, although she did not practice, and her father was an inventor. Certainly, St. Denis's self-presentation in her adult life ("respectably" married to her partner Ted Shawn, e.g.) indicated an alignment with the middle class.

a story, where the priestess Radha might be imagined, or a painting, where she might be displayed and observed, but a live performance. As I have already mentioned, the middle-class white woman's body is central to the production of pleasure in the relationship of these three markers of otherness as discussed above. But it is also the factor that ultimately confounds binary constructions of meaning. In the ludic or dreamlike space of performance, the performer is both white and nonwhite, Western and Eastern, and female while usurping the male role of choreographer. (Remember that at that time, although most dancers were female, very few dances were choreographed by women.)

What issues of spectatorship and the production of meaning do these complications raise? At the very least, they unsettle the binarisms of the ideologies that undergird racism, sexism, and orientalism. The element of mastery, however, implied by the right to represent the "other," remains.

But if we look at the choreography, with its combination of skirt-dancing turns, ballet steps, and "Indian" gestures, something else becomes apparent. The dance itself serves as a sign of the cultural process of "othering" through representation—an ongoing process of construction that is always self-reflexive with regard to the culture that produces it. The representative codes of vaudeville skirt-dancing collide with iconic signs of Indianness, mixing with and overlaying one another as a sign of cultural interaction and continually renegotiated meaning.<sup>66</sup>

Although there is no Brechtian self-reflexivity built into the theatrical structure of "Radha," implicit in every performance is the spectator's awareness of the construction of an illusion.<sup>67</sup> Because of its existence as a temporal art—and a three-dimensional one that is dependent on the physical presence of the performer in the same space as the audience (i.e., not sculpture, not film, not literature)—live performance must produce a convincing linkage of similarity and difference.<sup>68</sup> The performer is both himself or herself and the character who is portrayed. Performance presents this as a dialectical relationship, always in negotiation.

<sup>66</sup> For a consideration of issues of negotiation in colonialism, see Homi Bhabha's "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, no. 28 (Spring 1984), 125–33.

<sup>67</sup> Brecht's theories of theater emphasized the notion of distancing, or the "alienation effect." By means of such devices as self-reflexivity his plays keep spectators aware that they are participating in the construction of a fiction; thus they avoid the conventions of realism that serve to naturalize ideology. See Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill & Wang, 1964).

<sup>68</sup> The situation is somewhat different with film. While the image composed of reflected light is less material than a play in performance, the evidentiary nature of the photographic image carries with it a strong coding of realism. In some ways, film can allow for a stronger identification (and temporary loss of the sense of self as separate from the fiction) than live performance. The complexities of this relationship between film and live performance will have to be considered as film theory is adapted to performance analysis.



Drawing on psychoanalytic film theories of spectatorship, I could argue that St. Denis as a white Westerner provides an avenue of psychological identification for her white Western audience. Framed by the essentialist, transcendent spirituality of the piece, the audience is brought into ego identification with the white as nonwhite and the Western as Eastern. At the same time, the voyeuristic and fetishistic aspects of the dance (enhanced by its construction as spectacle) objectify it as separate from the observer. A "colored" white woman (since this is not caricature of the minstrel-show variety) also evokes an ambiguous response. While "mixing" sexualizes the white woman, it simultaneously indicates a potential mixing of the races, legally proscribed at the time. If ideologies are based on binary constructions of difference necessary to the maintenance of hegemony, performance thus indicates the ambiguity of such binary constructions and their true dialectical function in the production of meaning.

Certainly St. Denis's rise to fame and her ability to present herself in respectable theaters as a woman alone on the stage is emblematic of the social changes in the women's sphere at the turn of the century. Still, her work remains conservative in its assertion of spirituality as the realm of woman and also in its presentation of woman's body as sexualized. One of St. Denis's achievements was to unite these supposed opposites.

Some critics have begun to pose questions theorizing the body in performance.<sup>69</sup> Questions of the power of representation become more complex when acted out on and through a material body. Is the female appropriation of sexual display in live performance, even within patriarchal norms, an act that in some way threatens the hegemony of patriarchy? That so much of the sexual pleasure in "Radha" is danced as self-pleasure (especially Radha's self-caressing) on the one hand asserts a new self-empowerment for woman and on the other belongs to traditional structures of pornographic viewing.<sup>70</sup>

In any performance, the venue and the particularities of audience are essential to the generation of meaning. Certainly the meanings activated by the first performance, for spectators who had just watched boxing and were soon to see trained monkeys, were somewhat different from those generated by the same piece in a "respectable" theater, framed as "art." Different still is the reception of "Radha" by our students today who dutifully sit through St. Denis films in dance history seminars.

<sup>69</sup> For interesting discussions of related concerns, see Elinor Fuchs, "Staging the Obscene," *Drama Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 33-57; and Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1988).

<sup>70</sup> For an analysis of the visual structures of pornographic viewing, see Annette Kuhn, "Lawless Seeing," in her *The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 19-47.

What the investigation of a piece like "Radha" can provide is an example of the necessity of unraveling the multiple strains of ideological meaning that are present in any work of performance and that are variously activated in specific viewing situations. For instance, similar doublings of race, exotica, and sexuality are played out in Josephine Baker's famous "banana dance." As a black woman, however, her construction as "exotic" never played as successfully in North America as in Europe.

As we reconsider the canon of dance history and integrate it with gender studies, it is not enough to ask how St. Denis conceived of her work, or how it relates to the dance history that precedes and follows it. Nor it is enough to ask how St. Denis's work reflected the changing roles of women in her day, or to note stylistic similarities between dance and other types of artistic products in the same historical period. All of these investigations produce valuable information and should not be ignored. But as scholars we must also look more deeply at the mechanisms of meaning on which the performance hinges and investigate the role of live display of the female body in activating those mechanisms, as I have attempted to do in this article. Only by more fully comprehending the production of ideology in every sphere of social construction, including the female body in performance, can we begin to sever the invisible links that bind racism, sexism, and cultural imperialism so tightly together.

*Institute of the Arts, and Dance Program  
Duke University*

---

# Luce Irigaray's "Contradictions": Poststructuralism and Feminism

Maggie Berg

THE WORK OF Luce Irigaray is regarded by many feminists as riven with contradictions: she is a poststructuralist and a Lacanian insofar as she believes that the subject is a discursive construct, making identity unstable; but, in order to rescue women from what she sees as the repressive effects of phallogentrism, she apparently proposes an alternative feminine discourse modeled on the female genitals.<sup>1</sup> Irigaray's "lips" have become the basis of debate: those critics (including Plaza, Jones, Moi, Burke) who regard her work as naive (it suggests the possibility of a prediscursive sexual identity) and dangerously essentialist (it posits an eternal essential femininity) have occasioned widespread feminist suspicion of poststructuralism as ultimately leading to a reactionary essentialism.<sup>2</sup>

I wish to thank Kate Tyler for her excellent and indefatigable editing; the anonymous *Signs* reviewers and my colleague Mary Carpenter for their immensely helpful criticisms of an earlier draft of this paper; and Scott Wallis for his suggestions and comments.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that the critics who translated and introduced Irigaray's essay for *Signs* criticize the French project in *Feminist Studies*; see Carolyn Burke, "Introduction to Luce Irigaray's 'When Our Lips Speak Together,'" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 66–68, and "Irigaray through the Looking-Glass," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 288–306; Helene Vivienne Wenzel, "Introduction to Luce Irigaray's 'And the One Doesn't Stir without the Other,'" *Signs* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1981): 56–59, and "The Text as Body/Politics: An Appreciation of Monique Wittig's Writings in Context," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 264–87. See also Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, New Accents Series (London and New York: Methuen, 1985); Beverly Brown and Parveen Adams, "The Feminine Body and Feminist Politics," *M/F* 3 (1979): 35–50; Rachel Bowlby, "The Feminine Female," *Social Text* 7 (Spring and Summer 1983): 54–68.

<sup>2</sup> See Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," in *Reconstructing the Academy: Women's Education and Women's Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Minnich, Jean O'Barr, and Rachel Rosenfeld (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 257–88 (first published in *Signs* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1988): 405–33); Jane Flax, "Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory," *Signs* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1987): 621–43; Daryl McGowan Tress, "Comment on Flax's 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory'"; and Jane Flax, "Reply to Tress," *Signs* 14, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 196–200, 201–3; Ann Rosalind Jones, "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of *Peculiarité féminine*," *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 247–63.

[*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1991, vol. 17, no. 1]

© 1991 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. 0097-9740/92/1701-0006\$01.00

Irigaray's defenders, on the other hand, regard her "lips" as having a "strategic" function: she posits a feminine essence not in order to trap women in deterministic definitions but to enable them to escape cultural definitions defined by men.<sup>3</sup> The only critic who has recently attempted to argue against the seemingly overwhelming consensus that Irigaray is essentialist is Jane Gallop, who claims that we should read Irigaray's work not as a politics but as a poetics of the body: "not predestined by anatomy but . . . already a symbolic interpretation of that anatomy."<sup>4</sup> The debate, as Diana Fuss says, "comes down to this question of whether the body stands in a literal or a figurative relation to language and discourse: are the two lips a metaphor or not?"<sup>5</sup> Formulating the problem of Irigaray's work in terms of an opposition is, however, symptomatic of a misconstruction of Irigaray's explicit disavowal of binaries that not even Gallop, despite her own poststructuralist style, avoids.

I suggest an alternative reading of Irigaray's lips. It is surely an example of old sexist double standards that Jacques Lacan is taken at his word when he insists that the phallus is not the organ to which the word *phallus* refers, whereas Irigaray's lips provoke accusations of naive essentialism. It may be true that both signifiers are equivocal (as Emile Benveniste said in a different context: "Here . . . is the *thing*, expressly excluded at first from the definition of the sign, now creeping into it by a detour, and permanently installing a contradiction there"),<sup>6</sup> but only Lacan is given the benefit of the doubt. While Lacan is appropriated to the feminist cause by critics such as Jacqueline Rose who insist that his remarks about there being no such thing as a woman are ironic exposures of the social representation of femininity, Irigaray's irony (which is more obvious than Lacan's) is almost wholly overlooked.<sup>7</sup> Yet Lacan reminds us that "desire must be taken literally," that is, he wants to be taken at his word.<sup>8</sup> To redress the Irigaray-Lacan critical imbalance, I propose reading Irigaray's lips as a counterpart to Lacan's phallus, but without ig-

<sup>3</sup> Diana Fuss, "'Essentially Speaking': Luce Irigaray's Language of Essence," *Hypatia* 3, no. 3 (Winter 1989): 63; Margaret Whitford, "Luce Irigaray and the Female Imaginary: Speaking as a Woman," *Radical Philosophy* 43 (Summer 1986): 3-8.

<sup>4</sup> Jane Gallop, *Thinking through the Body* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 94. For another argument that Irigaray is not essentialist, see my "Escaping the Cave: Luce Irigaray and Her Feminist Critics," in *Literature and Ethics: Essays Presented to A. E. Malloch*, ed. Gary Wihl and David Williams (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 62-76.

<sup>5</sup> Fuss, 68.

<sup>6</sup> Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary E. Meek (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), 44.

<sup>7</sup> Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds., *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York and London: Norton, 1982), 50-51.

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: Norton, 1977), 256.

noring their irony, because I think the apparent contradictions in Irigaray's work are resolved by recognizing her ironic critique of Lacan.

### Feminists on Irigaray

Open your lips; don't open them simply. I don't open them simply. We—you/I—are neither open nor closed. We never separate simply: a single word cannot be pronounced, produced, uttered by our mouths. Between our lips, yours and mine, several voices, several ways of speaking resound endlessly, back and forth.<sup>9</sup>

Understandably, perhaps, the immediate reactions to Irigaray were suspicious, not to say hostile. Monique Plaza, writing in an early issue of *Questions féministes*, countered: "All that 'is' woman comes to her in the last instance from her anatomical sex, which touches itself all the time. Poor woman."<sup>10</sup> Irigaray perpetrates, says Plaza, the "Eternal Feminine," who is moreover (by virtue of avoiding masculine, i.e., coherent, discourse) the "eternal idiot": "illogical, mad, prattling, fanciful."<sup>11</sup> Plaza is "astonished" at Irigaray's "cheerfully prescribing woman's social and intellectual existence from her 'morphology,' . . . when we remember that [she] criticized Freud's prescription of the psychical by the anatomical." Plaza concludes that Irigaray's "positivism" is "matched by a flagrant empiricism."<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the best known of the "Anglo-American" interpretations of what has come to be known as "new" French feminist writing is Ann Rosalind Jones's article "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of *l'écriture féminine*." The article, which echoes Plaza's objections to Irigaray, was first published in 1981 when very little of Irigaray's work had been translated into English.<sup>13</sup> No doubt because of its pathbreaking role but also possibly because it reads the French authors within a materialist feminist framework congenial to a British and North American audience, Jones's criticism remained influential among Western scholars. Her article was republished in three anthologies with very different critical orientations in 1985 when two of Irigaray's major books became available

<sup>9</sup> Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 209.

<sup>10</sup> Monique Plaza, "Phallogomorphic Power and the Psychology of 'Woman': A Patriarchal Chain," trans. M. David and J. Hodges, in *Human Sexual Relations: A Reader*, ed. Mike Brake (London and New York: Penguin, 1982), 353 (first published in *Questions féministes* 1 [November 1978]: 91–111).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 352, 353.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

<sup>13</sup> Jones, "Writing the Body" (n. 2 above). When Jones's article was first published, only Irigaray's essays "When Our Lips Speak Together" and "And the One Doesn't Stir without the Other" had been translated into English: the former in *Signs* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 66–79, and the latter in *Signs* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1981): 56–67.

in English.<sup>14</sup> When Jones castigates the French for claiming "that female subjectivity is derived from women's physiology and bodily instincts as they affect sexual experience and the unconscious,"<sup>15</sup> she effectively inverts the French concept of the subject as discursive; it is Jones who creates an essentialist position by defining the unconscious as the innate, a priori, origin of subjective experience. What Jones misses is that Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva hold the Lacanian view of the unconscious as the product of the subject's insertion into the symbolic; it is not the cause but the consequence of women's social experience. Irigaray does not offer "as the starting point for a female self-consciousness the facts of women's bodies and women's sexual pleasure," as Jones maintains;<sup>16</sup> on the contrary, Irigaray attempts, through discourse, to reconstruct women's bodies and their sexual pleasure. Her essay on Freud in *Speculum of the Other Woman* exposes the role of language in the construction of female sexuality and the body, just as her essay "When Our Lips Speak Together" alters them discursively.<sup>17</sup>

Kaja Silverman more recently (1988) has also been troubled by Irigaray's lips; her reading of Irigaray is perhaps surprising in view of her earlier critique of Lacan in *The Subject of Semiotics*, in which she held that "it is preposterous to assume . . . that woman remains outside of signification," since both the female and the male subject's "linguistic inauguration" cuts them off from immediate "being."<sup>18</sup> Although this echoes aspects of Irigaray's rejection of Lacan, Silverman nevertheless catches Irigaray committing an error similar to Lacan's in suggesting that feminine sexuality lies outside of (phallogocentric) signification. Silverman explains in *The Acoustic Mirror* that Irigaray "dreams of forging an existential or indexical relation between words and the female body," which she "celebrates, as though it were an accomplished fact."<sup>19</sup> In doing so, says Silverman, Irigaray simply repeats an approach that she otherwise denounces as phallogocentric: "All Western discourse," Irigaray

<sup>14</sup> Jones, "Writing the Body," republished in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 361-77, and in *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature and Culture*, ed. Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfeld (New York: Methuen, 1985), 86-101; see also a similar article by Ann Rosalind Jones, "Inscribing Femininity: French Theories of the Feminine," in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Gayle Green and Coppelia Kahn (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), 80-112.

<sup>15</sup> Jones, "Writing the Body," in Showalter, ed., 362.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>17</sup> For Irigaray's essay on Freud, see Luce Irigaray, "The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry," in Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 13-129.

<sup>18</sup> Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1983), 189. I am indebted to Mary Carpenter for pointing this out to me.

<sup>19</sup> Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 145.

explains in *Women's Exile*, "presents a certain isomorphism with the masculine sex . . . the privilege of unity, form of the self, of the visible, of the specularisable, of erection."<sup>20</sup> Irigaray's suggestion of a discourse modeled on the labia to replace one modeled on the phallus is, according to Silverman, phallogentric and essentialist. There seems sufficient evidence for Silverman's view that Irigaray considers women to have an extradiscursive sexuality: "We are women from the start," says Irigaray in "When Our Lips Speak Together"; "we don't have to be turned into women by them, labeled by them" (referring to men).<sup>21</sup> She also writes: "Long before your birth, you touched yourself, innocently."<sup>22</sup>

It is important, however, to distinguish an indexical relation of language to the body, which Irigaray does not claim, from a morphological one. An indexical sign, as Silverman explains, is understood to be existentially connected to its referent, whereas a morphological or iconic sign merely draws attention to formal resemblances.<sup>23</sup> If Irigaray criticizes the phallomorphism of discourse, she does not make any claims about which comes first, the penis or the phallus; in fact, she suggests that the focus on the penis in the construction of male sexuality is a consequence of values inscribed in discourse, especially that which Lacan describes as a "fantasy of *oneness*" (i.e., the dream of singularity, unity, coherence).<sup>24</sup> Similarly, with respect to the morphological relation that Irigaray establishes between language and the female body, the lips do not refer to the labia (although they aim to alter the way in which we perceive the female genitals); I will return to this in the last section of this article.

Silverman objects that rather than attempting to liberate "a prediscursive sexuality" (which does not exist), we should be transforming "the discursive conditions under which women live their corporeality."<sup>25</sup> This is certainly a reasonable response, but, strangely, Silverman is echoing Irigaray's own sentiment in the essay "This Sex Which Is Not One": "In order for a woman to reach the place where she takes pleasure as a woman, a long detour by way of the analysis of the various systems of oppression brought to bear upon her is assuredly necessary."<sup>26</sup> In other words, a woman experiences her body and its pleasures only within the repressive "discursive conditions under which" it is lived. Irigaray emphasizes that because female sexuality is defined by "the imaginary and symbolic processes that regulate the

<sup>20</sup> Irigaray, quoted by Silverman in *ibid.*, 145, from "Women's Exile: Interview with Luce Irigaray," trans. Couze Venn, *Ideology and Consciousness*, no. 1 (1977), 65.

<sup>21</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (n. 9 above), 212.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>23</sup> Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds. (n. 7 above), 137.

<sup>25</sup> Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 146.

<sup>26</sup> Luce Irigaray, "This Sex Which Is Not One," in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 31.

workings of a society and a culture,"<sup>27</sup> it is impossible to disengage "woman" from the current symbolic system: Irigaray agrees with Silverman, then, that it is impossible to liberate "a prediscursive sexuality." The conditions that determine women's sexuality are, in Irigaray's view, ultimately discursive. Irigaray maintains that a politics of women that ignores discourse "would leave room neither for women's sexuality, nor for women's imaginary, nor for women's language to take (their) place."<sup>28</sup> For Irigaray, women's sexuality is, as Silverman suggests, entirely discursive, so that altering the conditions under which it is lived entails altering language itself.

So what are we to make of the female lips? Margaret Whitford argues that Irigaray "is speaking not of biology but of the imaginary": "A distinction needs to be made between (a) women as biological and social entities and (b) the 'female,' 'feminine' or 'other,' where female stands metaphorically for the genuinely other in a relation of difference (as in the system consciousness/unconscious) rather than opposition."<sup>29</sup> If Irigaray is referring not to empirical women but to a metaphorical "Other" in relation to a masculine subject, her work would have no bearing on feminist thought and would merely be a repetition of a phallogocentric gesture: if the feminine is simply "Other," the masculine remains the normative subject. While agreeing with an interviewer who complained that "I simply fail to understand the masculine-feminine oppositions," Irigaray observed that "the problem is that of a possible alterity in masculine discourse" (emphasis mine).<sup>30</sup> Whitford fears "that a provisional identification between female and 'female' may entrap the user."<sup>31</sup> Far from being a trap, however, some sort of identification between "woman" as a discursive construct and woman as a "biological and social" entity is absolutely necessary and is central to Irigaray's work. Had Whitford recognized that masculine and feminine are in a relation of "différance" rather than "difference" in Irigaray's work, she would not, I maintain, also have made the misleading split between empirical and textual women.<sup>32</sup>

Jane Gallop's recent reevaluation of Irigaray in *Thinking through the Body* (in *The Daughter's Seduction*, Gallop seemed to subscribe to the

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>29</sup> Whitford (n. 3 above), 7.

<sup>30</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 140.

<sup>31</sup> Whitford, 7.

<sup>32</sup> "Différance" combines "to differ" and "to defer," in order to remind us that difference is not a consequence of identity but, rather, makes identity possible. For a full exposition of différance, see Jacques Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology: Interview with Julia Kristeva," in Derrida's *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 15-36.



view that Irigaray is essentialist) is the most sympathetic reading so far.<sup>33</sup> Gallop sees Irigaray creating a tension between the politics of the body (which Gallop equates with the referential use of language) and a poetics (which "reconstructs anatomy in its own image")<sup>34</sup> in order to expose and problematize our tendency to read the textual body as though it were the anatomical one. While I could not agree more with Gallop's warning against talking "as if there were such a thing as a 'body itself,' unmediated by textuality,"<sup>35</sup> the distinction between a politics and a poetics of the body—however provisional, and however Irigaray complicates it—is misleading. Irigaray's discursive construction of the body inevitably has a political effect: as Gallop points out, our perception of the body is already always mediated, so that the textual body, its "ideology," is the body as far as we know. The problem with Gallop's emphasis on Irigaray's poetics is that it confirms the erroneous assumption that poststructuralism is apolitical, by maintaining a traditional distinction—which Irigaray denies—between the metaphoric and the referential (political) use of language. Gallop's term for Irigaray's discourse, "vulvomorphic," is strangely biological in view of her claim that Irigaray's textual body is not to be simplistically linked to anatomy. Nowhere does Irigaray propose "vulvomorphism": "les lèvres [qui] se parlent" or "the lips that speak to themselves"<sup>36</sup> are carefully chosen for their ambiguity, referring simultaneously to the production or construction of textuality (the lips that speak) and sexuality (the genitals); the point is that the two cannot and should not be separated, because one always implies the other.

Irigaray's essay "When Our Lips Speak Together," which is central to the debate about the status of Irigaray's female body, attempts neither to forge an existential relation between language and the female body (Silverman) nor to offer a poetics of the body distinct from a politics (Gallop). Irigaray's lips are, as Gallop suggests, a discursive phenomenon, but irony is crucial: while the lips bear a similar relation to the labia as Lacan's phallus does to the penis, they are offered playfully or ironically in order to avoid the phallogocentric gesture of displacing the phallus with an alternative hierarchy. "When Our Lips Speak Together," which has caused so much unease among feminists, is as much a critique of Lacan as the essay "Così fan tutti," which explicitly interrogates him, but the former is much more successful at unveiling the phallus.<sup>37</sup> (The phallus

<sup>33</sup> See Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), in which Irigaray seems to be "seduced" by both Freud and Lacan: "She joins Lacan the ladies' man, even Lacan the prick" (41).

<sup>34</sup> Gallop, *Thinking through the Body* (n. 4 above), 94.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>36</sup> Taken from the French title of the original essay, in Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1977), 203.

<sup>37</sup> Luce Irigaray, "Così fan tutti," in Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 86–105.

can function as a signifier, says Lacan, only as veiled, i.e., when it is not recognized as the penis.) Irigaray's lips, significantly, self-consciously oscillate between signifier and signified to reveal the impossibility of Lacan's claim that the penis is not the organ to which *phallus* refers. Lacan's logic, says Irigaray, is one that is "unaware of itself," that is, is unaware of its own ideology.<sup>38</sup> Irigaray mimics Lacan's phallus in order to expose it; elsewhere she explains that ironic imitation is a strategy for uncovering the repression of women: "To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself . . . to . . . ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make 'visible,' by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible."<sup>39</sup> Irigaray's lips are a "playful repetition" of Lacan, exposing Lacan's failure to sustain his premise that gender, constructed entirely within discourse, is unstable, arbitrary, and therefore open to choice. Despite his claims that the speaking being can line up on whichever side of the phallus she chooses,<sup>40</sup> Lacan renders it impossible for one born without a penis to be on the side of the phallus: gender, within the determinism of his discursive system, is ultimately linked to anatomy.

### Lacan on women

The value of psychoanalysis for feminism, says Rose, is its challenge to any prediscursive and therefore determining sexual identity:<sup>41</sup> Lacan shows us that "men and women are only ever in language."<sup>42</sup> This may be true, and it is certainly what appeals to feminists about Lacan, but insofar as women can also be mothers, they cannot, in Lacan's terms, be "on the side of the man."<sup>43</sup> How we acquire gendered identity depends upon our relation to the "real" of biological reproduction, according to Lacan, just as the phallus, which Lacan claims to distinguish from the penis, is nevertheless "what stands out as most easily seized upon in the real of sexual copulation."<sup>44</sup> While insisting that the body is constructed in discourse, Lacan makes the position of the speaker in discourse inextricably tied to his/her anatomy. Women, as Irigaray shows, are placed by Lacan's discourse in an impossible double bind: excluded from a system from which nothing escapes.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>40</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds. (n. 7 above), 143.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 82.

Like Freud, Lacan makes the oedipal complex central to a theory of the subject, with the difference, says Judith Butler, that "the oedipal complex does not designate an event or primary scene that could be empirically verified, but indicates instead a set of linguistic laws that are foundational to gender and individuation."<sup>45</sup> For Lacan, Butler explains, the linguistic structures—the "elementary structures of reference and differentiation"—are effected in the child as a result of the incest taboo, which in turn is known through the "primary forms of differentiation that separate the child from the mother, and that locate the child within a network of kinship relations."<sup>46</sup> In other words, the awareness of gender takes place cumulatively within the symbolic. But so long as the incest taboo is central to a theory of how we acquire a cultural identity, the mother's body will be identified with a precultural state. True, it is not the "real" body that is the issue, but in Lacan's view the subject can only "mean" (i.e., represent himself/herself in the symbolic) by barring (or repressing) "being," which is the stage of unmediated identification with the mother.<sup>47</sup> The child accedes to language in the "Name-of-the-Father"—by acknowledging paternity, which depends on signification—and by transcending or barring the imaginary unity with the mother's body.<sup>48</sup> Lacan thus relegates the maternal woman's body to the "real" of biological reproduction that lies outside of culture or the symbolic.

Once the subject enters the symbolic, the mother becomes the focus of a nostalgic desire for lost unity, for the state of non-meaning, prior to subjecthood; this means, of course, that she also serves as a cautionary reminder "against going beyond a certain limit in *jouissance*" and losing individual identity.<sup>49</sup> The attempt of the "I" who speaks to reunite with the I who is speaking produces "non-meaning": "If we choose being, the subject disappears, it eludes us, it falls into non-meaning."<sup>50</sup> If the mother represents our nostalgia for "being," she also represents the danger of dissolution of the self; she is consequently the focus of our ambiguous feelings about the symbolic realm, which both enables identity and entails a loss of immediacy. Lacan says that insofar as we acknowledge the "Name-of-the-Father," we take our place in the symbolic by submitting to a purely metaphorical relationship; but insofar as we identify with the

<sup>45</sup> Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 201.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: Norton, 1981), 211.

<sup>48</sup> For the function of "Name-of-the-Father," or the paternal metaphor, see Lacan, *Écrits* (n. 8 above), 197–200.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>50</sup> Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 211.

mother, we sacrifice the exigencies of symbolization and retreat from the symbolic.

Lacan claims the phallus is the signifier of both desire—"the phallus is . . . veiled as the ratio of the Other's desire"<sup>51</sup>—and the recognition of the impossibility of satisfaction—the "lack inscribed in the signifying chain through which the Other, as the only possible site of truth, reveals that it holds no guarantee."<sup>52</sup> If the phallus represents both the promise and the impossibility of unity, both sexes would have an identical relation to the phallus; why, then, does Lacan also say that men *have* the phallus and women attempt to *be* it? And how can Lacan say that the castration complex is the recognition that the mother does not have the "real" phallus? If the phallus is a pure signifier and the "real" cannot be known, what would it mean to be without a phallus? It seems that within the symbolic it is only the woman who is a poor shadow of her imaginary self (the man does not arouse the same "intimations of immortality"),<sup>53</sup> so that she bears the burden of loss and the man the promise (which may equally be a burden) of fulfillment. The penis, says Lacan, makes connections: by virtue of its turgidity it is "the image of the vital flow as it is transmitted in generation"<sup>54</sup> (an echo of Aristotle?),<sup>55</sup> whereas the clitoris, by contrast, is "autistic"<sup>56</sup> (i.e., it cannot make discursive or sexual connections).

Lacan's key statements on women, which are said to have been taken up by Kristeva, Cixous, and Irigaray, are: "There is no such thing as *The* woman" and "There is woman only as excluded by the nature of things which is the nature of words."<sup>57</sup> Jacqueline Rose defends Lacan from what she calls a "misreading" that interprets him as excluding women from language: "Woman is excluded *by* the nature of words, meaning that the definition poses her as exclusion. Note that this is not the same thing as saying that woman is excluded *from* the nature of words, a misreading which leads to the recasting of the whole problem in terms of woman's place outside language, the idea that women might have of themselves an entirely different speech."<sup>58</sup> If Lacan's statements about women mean simply that the definition of something objectifies it (which

<sup>51</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds., 83.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>53</sup> Taken from the title of a poem by William Wordsworth; see Jack Stollinger, ed., *Selected Poems and Prefaces by William Wordsworth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 186.

<sup>54</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds., 82.

<sup>55</sup> See "On the Generation of Animals," in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 677–78.

<sup>56</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds., 91.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

is rather trite), one wonders why he formulates the problem in terms of "woman." Why not *man* "is excluded by the nature of words"? Rose defends Lacan's statement, "The woman does not exist," as Lacan's exposure of sexual fantasy: "~~The~~ woman . . . is *not*, because she is defined purely against the man (she is the negative of that definition—'man is *not* woman'), and because this very definition is designated a fantasy."<sup>59</sup> To the extent that the woman constitutes man's fantasy, says Rose, she can be said not to exist. But this still does not explain why Lacan does not say, "Man does not exist," which would be equally true. Lacan insists: "When any speaking being whatever lines up under the banner of women it is by being constituted as not all that they are placed within the phallic function. It is this that defines the . . . the what?—the woman precisely, except that *The* woman can only be written with the *The* crossed through. There is no such thing as *The* woman, where the definite article stands for the universal. There is no such thing as *The* woman since of her essence . . . she is not all."<sup>60</sup> What Lacan means is that only the presymbolic mother is "all," and since she can never be retrieved, women as we know them are essentially *not* all. "Woman" as a universal—in terms of what Lacan suggests is the only defining characteristic, motherhood—does not exist. She "exists" only in imaginary oneness with the subject, which is to say that she does not exist as such within signification. Lacan reminds us in "God and the *jouissance* of ~~The~~ Woman"<sup>61</sup> that the sexualization of woman takes place in discourse and so is subject to a logical requirement in speech that the woman as "not all" is substituted for the "all." In other words, entry into language requires that the presymbolic mother be replaced by the woman who reminds the subject of the loss of immediate "being," that is, of what the subject lacks.

Lacan sees desire as metaphorical: desire in the symbolic is always a substitution for the impossible desire for the immediacy of "being" in the imaginary unity with the mother: "The subject designates his being," Lacan says, "only by crossing through everything which it signifies."<sup>62</sup> As Anika Lemaire explains, the subject must formulate metaphors for his/her true desire because of the existence of the father: "The desire for union with the mother, is repressed and replaced by a substitute which names it and at the same time transforms it: the symbol."<sup>63</sup> If desire for the mother is the original signifier, it is "barred" or transformed into the

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 48–49.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>61</sup> Jacques Lacan, "God and the *jouissance* of ~~The~~ Woman," quoted in Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (n. 9 above), 89; for an excerpt from this seminar, see Mitchell and Rose, eds., 137–48.

<sup>62</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds., 82.

<sup>63</sup> Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 87.

signified, replaced by a new signifier. Lacan always represents the relation between signifier and signified hierarchically:

$$\frac{S}{s} \quad ^{64}$$

The bar represents the ineluctable separation of the two. Lacan's algorithms are complex and obscure, but their pretensions to objectivity mask an ideological and imaginary construction. His algorithm for the signifying substitution in which the "Name-of-the-Father" stands "in the place . . . of the absence of the mother" is represented thus:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Name-of-the-Father} & \text{Desire of the Mother} & \longrightarrow \\ \text{Desire of the Mother} & \text{Signified to the subject} & \\ & \text{Name-of-the-Father} \left( \frac{O}{\text{Phallus}} \right) & ^{65} \end{array}$$

What matters in this otherwise incomprehensible diagram is that the mother occupies the place of the signified, beneath the bar.<sup>66</sup> Lacan says that each unit of any signifying chain has "a whole articulation of relevant contexts suspended 'vertically,' as it were, from that point."<sup>67</sup> As Derrida says of Lacan, you should not satisfy the longing for transcendence by giving primacy to the signifier, especially, Irigaray would add, if the mother is always that which is beneath the bar, repressed and consigned to the realm of potential signification.<sup>68</sup> Lacan's conception of desire is phallogocentric in Irigaray's view because his conception of meaning is phallomorphic: the relation between signifier and signified is explicitly hierarchical. Using the example of a tree, Lacan shows how it "can . . . call up" various associations, but all are nevertheless "suspended 'vertically'" (my emphasis) from the signifier.<sup>69</sup> "Why not

<sup>64</sup> See, e.g., Lacan, *Écrits* (n. 8 above), 200.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth A. Grosz says (*Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* [London: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1990], 101) that Lacan's "formulae are fundamentally incoherent as mathematical or logical hypotheses. They are irresolvably obscure if taken seriously as formulae." Jane Gallop says (*Reading Lacan* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985], 119) that "these algorithms are absurd."

<sup>67</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*, 154.

<sup>68</sup> For Derrida, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translator's Preface," in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), lxiv; for Irigaray, see Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 89. For a different interpretation of Irigaray's attitude to the maternal, see Donna Stanton, "Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva," in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 157-82. I cannot agree with Stanton's inclusion of Irigaray among those who "reproduce the dichotomy between male rationality and female materiality, corporeality and sexuality" (170) by celebrating the pre-oedipal relationship between mother and child.

<sup>69</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*, 154.

rather," asks Irigaray, "have recalled those 'pictures' made for children, pictographs in which the hunter and hunted, and their dramatic relationships, are to be discovered *between* the branches, made out from *between* the trees. From the . . . Spaces that organize the scene, blanks that subtend the scene's structuration."<sup>70</sup> Rather than interpreting the dream (expression of desire) in terms of a "teleologically horizontal or vertical displacement," Irigaray recognizes that the gaps between the trees are as important as the trees; rather than conceiving of desire as substitution, Irigaray wishes to emphasize its metonymic nature: the woman as "all" is never entirely displaced by the woman as "not all."

In Lacan's theory, as Judith Butler points out, desire is coordinated not with the object that would satisfy it but with an originally lost object, the mother, or woman as "all."<sup>71</sup> Irigaray puts it even more bluntly: "'She' [is] the projection onto that in-fant 'being' . . . of his relation to nihilism."<sup>72</sup> "The woman," insofar as Lacan identifies her with the mother, represents man's relation to nonexistence in the imaginary—hence Lacan's controversial statements that "the woman" does not exist.

Despite his claim that human identity and gender are constructed only in discourse, Lacan's theory implicitly supports the notion of transcending a biological origin: the mother is identified with a natural state that must be overcome for the subject to take up its place in the cultural realm. The distinction between paternity and maternity in Lacan's system is that paternity depends on signification; maternity, apparently, does not: "There is no need of a signifier to be a father, any more than to be dead, but without a signifier no one would ever know anything about either state of being."<sup>73</sup> What we have is a prediscursive state construed within discourse as identification with the mother; a nature-culture opposition is created in a system that purports to deny it. The problem, as Irigaray points out in "Così fan tutti," is that although "anatomy is no longer available to serve . . . as proof-alibi for the real difference between the sexes," Lacan now makes women's exclusion "*internal* to an order from which nothing escapes."<sup>74</sup>

### More of Irigaray on Lacan

Irigaray does not (as is frequently assumed) accept women's exclusion from the Symbolic, but from Lacan's system of the Symbolic. In response to Lacan's "Woman does not exist," Irigaray counters, "Fortunately there

<sup>70</sup> Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (n. 17 above), 137–38.

<sup>71</sup> Butler, *Subjects of Desire* (n. 45 above), 193.

<sup>72</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 95.

<sup>73</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*, 199.

<sup>74</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 87–88.

are *women*" (my emphasis).<sup>75</sup> This does not mean, however, that she begins at the other end (so to speak) and creates the textual "woman" out of the empirical bodies of "women."<sup>76</sup> Irigaray's position resembles Kristeva's, if we correctly read the following: "A woman cannot 'be'; it is something which does not belong in the order of *being*. It follows that a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists."<sup>77</sup> Kristeva here juxtaposes a feminist practice with a reconceptualized identity. The claim that "a woman cannot 'be'" is not an affirmation of Lacan's woman as "not all," but is rather a deliberate avoidance of what Gayatri Spivak calls the "sovereign subject" of phallocentrism: Kristeva is effecting "the deconstruction-of [*sic*] man's insistence upon his own identity."<sup>78</sup> An identity that is constantly in flux is not contained by the regime of "*being*," and can only be "at odds with what already exists," because it will continually extend and shift its boundaries. Irigaray's practice is similarly "at odds with what already exists" because of her post-structuralist conception of the subject. It is not the woman's body as such that is at issue in her quarrel with Lacan but what that body is "made to uphold of the operation of a language that is unaware of itself."<sup>79</sup> Because Lacan's system is "unaware of itself" as a constructed system, it lacks recognition of what is repressed for the sake of coherence. "Woman comes into play" in this system "only as mother";<sup>80</sup> Irigaray says this is inscribed in the entire "philosophical corpus,"<sup>81</sup> in which woman is designated as "the unconscious womb of man's language,"<sup>82</sup> the "Other" who "serves as matrix/womb for the subject's signifiers."<sup>83</sup>

Because Lacan claims that the subject enters language only by repressing desire for the mother, Irigaray aims to show "what the unconscious" of his text "has borrowed from the feminine."<sup>84</sup> As Barbara Johnson reminds us, a deconstructive reading "does not ask 'what does this statement *mean*?' but 'where is it being made from?'" or what are the "grounds" of its "possibility"? Such a critique "reads backwards from what seems natural, obvious, self-evident, or universal, in order to show

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>76</sup> Jacqueline Rose, e.g., in Mitchell and Rose, eds. (n. 7 above), says that "femininity is assigned to a point of origin prior to the mark of symbolic difference and the law"; this, which is clearly impossible, turns the French feminists' position into one that is untenable (54).

<sup>77</sup> Julia Kristeva, in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 137.

<sup>78</sup> Gayatri Spivak, "French Feminism in an International Frame," *Yale French Studies* 62, no. 2 (1981): 171.

<sup>79</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 93.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.



that these things have their history, their reasons for being the way they are, their effects on what follows from them, and that the starting point is not a (natural) given but a (cultural) construct, usually blind to itself."<sup>85</sup> According to Irigaray, the fundamental "condition" of Lacan's systematicity is the "woman," especially the "earth-mother-nature" that "nourishes" his speculating subject: she is the very condition presupposing subjectivity.<sup>86</sup> Asks Irigaray: "Once imagine that woman imagines [that is, becomes a subject as opposed to an object], there is no more 'earth' to press down/repress, to work to represent, but also and always to desire . . . no opaque matter which in theory does not know herself, then what pedestal remains for the ex-istence of the 'subject'?"<sup>87</sup> Irigaray's deconstructive strategy of filling in the gaps seems less successful in her reading of Lacan (in "Così fan tutti") than in her readings of Freud and Plato. Perhaps this is because of the peculiarity of Lacan's text: although the discourse he articulates is continually destabilized by the unconscious, it seems in effect to tie us strongly to rationality as we attempt to make sense of it. Irigaray's ironic interlocutions only exacerbate the problem. Lacan may be—to paraphrase Irigaray—speaking to himself about love in order to speak love to himself,<sup>88</sup> but Irigaray's intervention in the narcissistic circle is not entirely successful.

We turn with relief to "When Our Lips Speak Together," which discards Lacan's text while keeping Lacan firmly in view. This essay more effectively unveils and disables the phallus. Irigaray's relation to Lacan here is much less equivocal, perhaps because she achieves her aim of a "double syntax (masculine-feminine)."<sup>89</sup> To use Gallop's terms, "When Our Lips Speak Together" is more political because it is more poetic: it enacts Irigaray's evolving subject constituted as "difference" within (endlessly oscillating between) the mediated "T" of the Symbolic (in the "Name-of-the-Father") and the immediate "T" experienced as fusion with the "Other" (in the name of the mother, we could say).

Carolyn Burke, the first translator of "When Our Lips Speak Together," presented it as an imagined "dialogue for female lovers" or between "two aspects of the self," but she makes only a passing reference to Lacan.<sup>90</sup> Irigaray's essay, however, could well have been written as an ironic rebuttal to Lacan's theory of the phallus, or to his declaration that the clitoris is "autistic" (i.e., it cannot communicate: it is impotent in the

<sup>85</sup> Barbara Johnson, introduction to Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), xv.

<sup>86</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 102.

<sup>87</sup> Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (n. 17 above), 133.

<sup>88</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 103.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>90</sup> Burke, "Introduction to Luce Irigaray's 'When Our Lips Speak Together'" (n. 1 above).

Symbolic).<sup>91</sup> Irigaray replies that "*woman has sex organs more or less everywhere*" and thus forges multifarious connections.<sup>92</sup>

With the two (or more) lips, Irigaray subverts the reproductive determinism of Lacan's theory: her emphasis on women's multifaceted sexuality exposes Lacan's theory as an example of what Gayatri Spivak calls the effacement of the clitoris: "Defining woman as object of exchange, passage, or possession in terms of reproduction, it is not only the womb that is literally 'appropriated'; it is the clitoris as the signifier of the sexed subject that is effaced."<sup>93</sup> In Lacan's theory, as Irigaray shows, woman (at least as "all") is the womb: "matrix/womb for the subject's signifiers."<sup>94</sup> Unlike Lacan, Irigaray refuses to appeal to biological origin for her conception of the subject; she shifts the emphasis away from the subject's relation to the mother in order to focus on the (mature) subject within the symbolic: "Forgive me, mother, I prefer a woman."<sup>95</sup> Irigaray's work conspicuously lacks a theory of the subject, or of identity, in terms of development from any fixed origin. Her aim is to retrieve the woman not from discourse, as Rose and others have maintained, but from determinism.

Whereas Lacan reneges on his premise that the subject is overdetermined—"events mesh with one another and are continually transformed through their exchange of meaning"<sup>96</sup>—Irigaray wants to sustain its continual transformation. Lacan himself acknowledges—but ignores—the dynamic nature of the subject: "What is realised in my history . . . is the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming."<sup>97</sup> Irigaray suggests, playfully, that we conceive of the subject altogether differently—"lipeccentrically," if you will, rather than phallocentrically.<sup>98</sup> This reconceptualization has many implications: it challenges Lacan's centered subject (defined teleologically with reference to its origin in the mother); it defines woman without reference to reproduction—in Spivak's words, as "clitorally ex-centric from the reproductive orbit"; and it constitutes the subject in flux, with reference to a continually deferred future rather than to a repressed past. "Kiss me. Two lips kissing two lips: openness is ours again. . . the passage between us, is limitless. Without end. . . When you kiss me . . . the horizon itself disappears. Are we unsatisfied? Yes, if that means we are never finished. If our pleasure consists in moving,

<sup>91</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds. (n. 7 above).

<sup>92</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 28.

<sup>93</sup> Spivak, "French Feminism in an International Frame" (n. 78 above), 181.

<sup>94</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 101.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>96</sup> Antoine Vergote, "From Freud's 'Other Scene' to Lacan's 'Other,'" in *Interpreting Lacan: Psychiatry and the Humanities*, ed. J. Smith and W. Kerrigan (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 6:207.

<sup>97</sup> Lacan, *Écrits* (n. 8 above), 86.

<sup>98</sup> "Lipeccentric" is my term, intended to convey the ex-centric and eccentric trajectory of subjectivity.

being moved, endlessly. Always in motion: openness is never spent or sated."<sup>99</sup> Irigaray claims that the subject's horizons are limitless. The traditional Freudian conception of the psyche, within which Lacan formulated his theory, is based on the notion that the organism needs equilibrium: this means that any "investment" of psychic energy requires a "return."<sup>100</sup> Irigaray replaces this "libidinal economy"—which, using Marx, she links with capitalism—with the conception of an unlimited "spending" of inexhaustible energy. "When Our Lips Speak Together" demonstrates the "differance" it makes when we take the lips rather than the phallus as the model for textual/sexual subjectivity. "Neither one nor two. I've never known how to count. Up to you. In their calculations, we make two. Really, two? Doesn't that make you laugh? . . . Let's leave *one* to them: their oneness, with its prerogatives, its domination, its solipsism. . . . And the strange way they divide up their couples, with the other as the image of the one."<sup>101</sup> Irigaray's emphasis on two or more lips and on the speaker's inability to count refers to Lacan's attempt to demonstrate in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* that "the subject has to recognize himself . . . as he who counts."<sup>102</sup> The importance of the child's counting is synonymous with the mirror stage which is the decisive event in the constitution of Lacan's subject. The mirror stage, in which the child (mis)recognizes its mirror image as a more coherent (and illusory) representation of the self, inaugurates entry into the symbolic realm, where language similarly presents a deceptively unified self.<sup>103</sup> The subject, as we have seen, is split between the immediacy of being (which cannot be represented in the symbolic) and the being that is conferred by language; but it is only the symbolic subject which "counts." "I have three brothers," says the child, "Paul, Ernest and me."<sup>104</sup> Once the boy in the example recognizes that it is he who counts, that is, that the represented self is and is not the speaking self, he assumes his split subjectivity; his representations, in the mirror and in language, become his own.<sup>105</sup> In Lacan's account, maturity requires repressing the (unmediated) one who is counting (i.e., the one identified with the mother) in favor of the only one that "counts" or matters (identified with the "Name-of-the-Father"); Lacan also implies that language is a flat plane, a mirror that represents an even or coherent image (however illusory) of the self. Irigaray sees language as a "speculum," giving back

<sup>99</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 210.

<sup>100</sup> See J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth, 1982), 127–30.

<sup>101</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 207.

<sup>102</sup> Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (n. 47 above), 20.

<sup>103</sup> For the "mirror stage," see Lacan, *Écrits*, 1–7.

<sup>104</sup> Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 20.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

an uneven, multiple, shifting self. The denial of the ability to count in "When Our Lips Speak Together" is a rejection of Lacan's conception of desire as metaphorical: in Lacan's account, the child replaces the mother—the "woman as all"—with the woman as "not all," because language is metaphorical. For Irigaray, language—and therefore desire—does not facilitate such a singular displacement, since metonymy occurs as frequently as metaphor. The essay emphasizes desire for that which is proximate and close (the self or female lover) rather than desire for the lost and displaced mother. Irigaray's evocation of indistinguishable yet multiple identities means that there can be no simple substitution for the desire for the mother: Lacan's claim that language performs the inevitable exclusion of the woman is thereby shown to be false.

As a dialogue between women, Irigaray's essay serves as a critique of the role Lacan—borrowing from Levi-Strauss—assigns to women. When Lacan reflects in *Écrits* that "the law of man has been the law of language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts," he affirms Levi-Strauss's myth of the origins of society in which women function as signs of cooperation between groups of men: "The emergence of symbolic thought must have required women to be things (reciprocally) exchanged like spoken words."<sup>106</sup> Lacan thus refers to empirical women rather than textual "woman." In "Women on the Market," Irigaray transposes Lacan's and Levi-Strauss's notion of women as objects of exchange into Marx's theory of commodities. The exchange value of women reduces them, Irigaray says, to "a common feature": "their current price in gold or phalluses. . . each one looks exactly like every other. They all have the same phantom-like reality."<sup>107</sup> Her claim that women's bodies have a phallus-value is derived from Marx's insight that the exchange value of a commodity is the projection of desire, a manifestation of (male) relations of production.<sup>108</sup> "When Our Lips Speak Together" opposes the fetishization of women whose exchange manifests the power of the phallus, by reestablishing the links between women alienated from one another by a competitive market: "Come back. . . We don't owe each other anything. . . What would I do with you, with myself, wrapped up like a gift? . . . bargains like these have no business between us. Unless we restage their commerce, and remain within their order."<sup>109</sup> The dialogue represents a refusal to allow the bodily form of

<sup>106</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*, 61; Claude Levi-Strauss, "Les structures élémentaires de la parenté," quoted in *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis: Jacques Lacan*, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), 254.

<sup>107</sup> Irigaray, "Women on the Market," in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 175.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 183: "Hence women's role as fetish-objects, inasmuch as, in exchanges, they are the manifestation and the circulation of a power of the Phallus, establishing relationships of men with each other?"

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 206.

one woman-commodity to mirror the exchange value of the other—"It would be frivolous of us, exchanged by them, to be so changeable"<sup>110</sup>—thereby rendering women inaccessible to a heterosexual economy: "Between us, one is not the 'real' and the other her imitation; one is not the original and the other her copy. Although we can dissimulate perfectly within their economy, we relate to one another without simulacrum."<sup>111</sup> "When Our Lips Speak Together" offers an alternative to the masculine "libidinal economy" of parsimonious desire.

We must not forget the lips: "Without lips, there is no more 'us.' The unity, the truth, the propriety of words comes from their lack of lips, their forgetting of lips."<sup>112</sup> Lacan's discourse, with its emphasis on the signifier as a unit—its phallomorphism—closes the gap in the play of "difference" between opposites: the result is that Otherness always collapses into Sameness and the feminine Other is always the negative of the masculine Self. Irigaray's lips, by contrast, emphasize continuity, circularity, supplementarity: "Our two lips cannot separate to let just *one* word pass. . . . Closed and open, neither ever excluding the other. . . . Together. To produce a single precise word, they would have to stay apart. Definitely parted. Kept at a distance, separated by *one word*."<sup>113</sup> The lips signify what Derrida calls the "open and productive displacement of the textual chain."<sup>114</sup> Irigaray wonders whether "the motifs of 'self-touching' of 'proximity' . . . might not imply a mode of exchange irreducible to any *centering*, any *centrism*."<sup>115</sup> The interrogative is important: Irigaray eschews dogmatic statement, or "univocity,"<sup>116</sup> because she does not wish to displace Lacan's phallus with the lips, which would be a phallogocentric strategy.

To avoid what she calls reproducing sameness by installing another hierarchy, Irigaray offers the lips playfully: "To escape from a pure and simple reversal of the masculine position," she says, we must not forget "to laugh." Laughter reminds us that "desire" and "pleasure" are "unrepresentable . . . in the 'seriousness'—the adequacy, the univocity, the truth . . . of a discourse that claims to state its meaning."<sup>117</sup> If Irigaray's lips speaking to themselves provoke a smile in the reader, so much the better: that response draws attention to the absurdity and pretentiousness of the phallus as a transcendental signifier. The irony with which the lips

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Derrida, *Positions* (n. 32 above), 45.

<sup>115</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 79.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

are offered is crucial; without it, Irigaray would be guilty of the phallogocentric strategy of reversal. The lips are also ironic because they have a dual and contradictory signification: they both do and do not refer to the labia. Far from forging an existential relation between language and the body, as Silverman suggests, Irigaray's lips textually reconstitute the anatomical labia, in a discursive context that enables them far to exceed anatomy. Equally misleading is Gallop's alternative to Silverman's explanation—that Irigaray is articulating a "poetics" of the body—because no distinction can be made between the "poetic" and the "political" articulation of the lips: they are always and only mediated through discourse.

Irigaray's "lipeccentrism" attempts to articulate a sexual identity that is not founded on a gesture of repression and denial, especially of the woman. Irigaray reminds us of what Lacan forgets: that gender is never fixed but is continually transformed as we live it; as Judith Butler says in a different context: "The origin of gender is not temporally discrete precisely because gender is not suddenly originated at some point in time after which it is fixed in form. In an important sense, gender is not traceable to a definable origin because it itself is an originating activity incessantly taking place."<sup>118</sup> Lacan's reaffirmation of the oedipal complex—in Irigaray's view a "categorical and factitious law"—makes us wonder to what extent, to quote Butler, "the reification of the prohibitive law is an ideological means of confirming that law's hegemony."<sup>119</sup> "When Our Lips Speak Together" attempts—to borrow from Michel Foucault in another context—to "develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization."<sup>120</sup> "When Our Lips Speak Together" demonstrates the vital link between a knowledge of difference within the self and the ability to acknowledge the differences among selves subjected to what Irigaray calls "the various systems of oppression."<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, if the "horizon" of identity continually disappears, this does not mean—contrary to Daryl McGowan Tress's claims of the poststructuralist subject—that "there is no one to emancipate";<sup>122</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Judith Butler, "Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittig and Foucault," in *Feminism as Critique*, ed. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 131.

<sup>119</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 27; Butler, *Subjects of Desire* (n. 45 above), 204.

<sup>120</sup> Michel Foucault, preface to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1977), xiii.

<sup>121</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 31.

<sup>122</sup> Tress (n. 1 above), 197.

rather, it means that the subject is oriented by desire toward half-glimpsed alternatives.<sup>123</sup> By emphasizing the "lipeccentric" (as opposed to "vulvomorphic") logic of Irigaray's text, we perform the double maneuver of which Irigaray is so fond: we do not immediately regard the body as though it were a given, thus essentializing it, but neither do we divest the textual body of its political effect. Irigaray's lips remind us that, to use Cixous's words, no political reflection can dispense with reflection on language.<sup>124</sup> Irigaray reclaims the body, because it is on this basis that women have been oppressed, but she has no wish to identify it outside of discourse (even if that were possible), because this would return women to where Lacan had placed them. Irigaray's irony has many dimensions: while it emphatically distinguishes the lips from the labia, it at the same time reveals how impossible it is to cut the signifier (lips) free of its habitual referent (labia) as Lacan claims to do with the phallus. Irigaray's text makes the signified (what goes on in our heads when we read the lips) so rich in connotation that it actually transforms the anatomical referent.

To assert woman's difference, as some critics claim Irigaray does, would simply make the lips the new phallus. Irigaray's aim is not to displace the phallus but, rather, to uncover "phalluses" as they function historically in various discourses, to "unveil" the assumptions on which systematicity depends.<sup>125</sup> In Lacan's case, ironically, the phallus turns out to be the "empty" womb: the contentless origin or matrix of the Symbolic. Irigaray's lips are an alternative to Lacan's phallus, but Irigaray does not constitute them as either "univocal" or privileged in the order of "being"; she does not pretend the lips are the "privileged signifier" of our culture.<sup>126</sup>

*Department of English  
Queen's University, Ontario*

<sup>123</sup> See my "Humanism vs. Post-Structuralism: The Debate in Feminist Theory," *Journal of the Canadian Humanities Association* (in press).

<sup>124</sup> Hélène Cixous, "Castration or Decapitation?" *Signs* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1981): 45.

<sup>125</sup> Mary Carpenter, "The Phallus as Hysterical/Historical Subject" (paper presented at Modern Language Association conference, Washington, December 30, 1989).

<sup>126</sup> Mitchell and Rose, eds. (n. 7 above), 82.

# Looking and Listening: The Construction of Clinical Knowledge in Charcot and Freud

Daphne de Marneffe

## Introduction

IN THE 1870s, the French neuropathologist Jean-Martin Charcot and his staff at the Salpêtrière produced a series titled *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* (1876–77, 1878, 1879–80). The three volumes presented case histories of women diagnosed as hysterical or hystero-epileptic, amply illustrated by photographs and diagrams.<sup>1</sup> Long verbatim transcriptions of patients' utterances during hysterical attacks offer highly detailed and often gruesome allusions to past traumas. Yet these allusions, framed by concrete medical measurements (temperatures taken, drugs administered, attacks arrested), receive no direct analysis or attention. Why did the writers of the *Iconographie* introduce these transcriptions, only to ignore them? And why, in contrast, was such great attention paid to *photographing* these patients, when photography seemed so comparatively ill-equipped to capture the subjective information conveyed by their words?

Less than twenty years later, in 1895, Freud and Breuer published their *Studies on Hysteria*. Like the *Iconographie*, the *Studies* presented carefully crafted representations of cases. Unlike the earlier work, however, Freud's and Breuer's investigations relied on verbal information from the (women) patients themselves, rather than on visual representation of their bodies. The *Studies* were motivated by many of the same concerns as the Salpêtrière volumes, but were dependent on radically different modes of inquiry and presentation.

I would like to thank Carol Gilligan, Nancy Chodorow, Peter de Marneffe, and Gabrielle Weinberg Bodow for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I am also grateful to Eric Sandweiss for his inspired editing.

<sup>1</sup> D. M. Bourneville and P. Regnard, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, 3 vols. (Paris: Aux Bureau du Progrès Médical, V. A. Delahaye & Cie, 1876–80). Hereafter cited as *IPS*.

[*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1991, vol. 17, no. 1]

© 1991 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. 0097-9740/92/1701-0004\$01.00



What is the intrinsic difference between the two approaches? And what difference does this difference make in what they were able to reveal or obscure? A reading of the *Iconographie* and the *Studies* demonstrates that both Charcot and Freud had access to similar information—namely, the sexual trauma of their women patients—but that they approached this information in very different ways. It struck me as I studied the two approaches that a comparison between them offered insights into some of the most basic questions of concern to feminist and other contemporary scholars: How can we know others? How does the position and approach of the knower affect the portrayal of the known? When women cannot speak, or speak and are not heard, how is their subjectivity distorted or obscured? What are subjectivity and objectivity, and in what ways do we connect our understanding of these terms with notions of gender and gender difference?

A comparison of Charcot's and Freud's approaches to their hysterical women patients touches on a number of specific issues in recent feminist scholarship as well. First, there is an ongoing debate over the feminist or misogynist import of Freud's work on women. His work is clearly both, at different moments, and psychoanalytic feminists have each found their own ways of working with the ambiguities and challenges presented by Freud's equivocal corpus. In my discussion here, I attempt to illuminate overlooked aspects of his contribution to the psychology of women by placing that contribution in historical context.

Second, hysteria is of continuing interest to feminists, because of both its historical association with women and its enigmatic status as an actual or socially constructed illness. The term "hysteria" itself derives from the Greek word *hystera*, meaning uterus, and early Greek and Egyptian medicine attributed the hysterical woman's emotional instability to the "wandering" of her womb. This idea has had surprising resilience throughout medical history.<sup>2</sup> A number of feminist scholars have explored the interplay of sociological, historical, medical, and psychological factors in the longstanding association of hysteria and women.<sup>3</sup> In this essay, I attempt to show how the methods Charcot and Freud used to study hysteria interacted with the emotions and utterances of the women studied to produce very different accounts of the nature of the disorder and the process of cure.

<sup>2</sup> For discussions of the history of hysteria, see I. Verth, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); and A. Krohn, *Hysteria: The Elusive Neurosis, Psychological Issues*, monograph 45/46 (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., C. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); E. Showalter, *The Female Malady* (New York: Pantheon, 1985); and C. Bernheimer and C. Kahane, eds., *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

Finally, beyond these more particular theoretical and historical questions, I am centrally concerned with approaches to knowing—specifically, the methods of looking and listening used by Charcot and Freud. A great deal of recent writing has explored the relations of gender and epistemology, and these writings inform the perspective I take here.<sup>4</sup> In what follows, I describe the methods that Charcot and Freud each used in studying hysteria and hysterical patients, paying special attention to the kind of information each sought to obtain from the patient, and the role and status given that information. An inquiry into the differences between the two approaches illuminates, I believe, the ways in which Freud's innovations in clinical method offered a radical solution to the problem of how to study subjective information scientifically.

## Charcot

### *Background*

In the early 1850s, Jean-Martin Charcot served his medical internship at the Salpêtrière. A virtual warehouse for roughly five thousand deranged and sick women, the hospital held little interest for most other interns his age. Charcot, however, was attracted by the Salpêtrière's large and diverse patient population, which provided an ideal opportunity for the comparative study of disorders. He had little respect for theoretical or experimental medicine carried out separately from patient populations, and the Salpêtrière's great number of patients provided a basis for statistical inferences about the incidence and prevalence of diseases in the general population.<sup>5</sup> Charcot immediately set himself to the task of systematically categorizing the patients at the great hospital, which he would later enthusiastically refer to as "a museum of living pathology."<sup>6</sup>

Charcot's appointment in 1862 as chief physician of a large unit at the Salpêtrière ushered in the first major phase of his career in neurology. Between the years of 1862 and 1870, Charcot made important contributions to the medical description of sclerosis, tabes, aphasia, and cerebral and spinal localizations. His prolific output during this period established neurology as a science and solidified his own reputation as the

<sup>4</sup> Relevant works include S. Harding and M. B. Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983; U.S. distributor, Boston: Kluwer, 1983); E. F. Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985); and S. Harding and J. O'Barr, eds., *Sex and Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> A. R. G. Owen, *Hysteria, Hypnosis, and Healing: The Work of J.-M. Charcot* (New York: Garrett, 1971), 38; T. Gelfand, "Charcot and Freud Revisited" (lecture, University of California, Berkeley, March 10, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> G. Guillaum, *J.-M. Charcot, 1825-1893: His Life and Work* (New York: Hoeber, 1959), 9-10; G. Guillaum and P. Mathieu, *La Salpêtrière* (Paris: Masson & Cie, 1925).

foremost neurologist of the day. In 1870, the restructuring of the Salpêtrière's wards led to the placement of women with the diagnosis of epilepsy and hysteria within the same ward. (This restructuring, as we shall see, had important implications for the clinical picture of hysteria that Charcot developed.) Charcot took charge of the ward and subsequently became interested in distinguishing epilepsy from hysteria. Charcot thus began working with hysterics in 1870 and pursued their study until his death in 1893. He became professor of pathological anatomy in 1872, and from 1872 to 1882 he delivered a series of influential lectures on his previous and current discoveries.

Between 1882 and 1893, Charcot devoted more than one-third of his lectures to hysteria. His service at the Salpêtrière continued to expand as more research space was commanded, more sophisticated technology was employed, and photography studios were equipped for the documentation and study of hysteria and other disorders. The means by which Charcot examined his patients and carried out his research was the celebrated clinicoanatomic method, developed in France during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Through his use of this method, Charcot analyzed and categorized clinical phenomena into "archetypes," fully developed examples of the disease, and analyzed these further to detect their anatomical bases.<sup>7</sup> The differentiation of an archetype from its "variants" emerged from the careful observation of numerous cases. Freud, later describing what Charcot proudly called his "practicing nosography," wrote that the archetypes "could be brought into prominence with the help of a certain sort of schematic planning, and with these archetypes as a point of departure, the eye could travel over the long series of ill-defined cases—the '*formes frustes*'—which, branching off from one or other characteristic feature of the type, melt away into indistinctness."<sup>8</sup>

Since the central tenet of the clinicoanatomic method was that disease arose from an anatomical lesion, it was suited to the study of diseases with obvious biological bases but was less well adapted to disorders whose main manifestations were psychological. Before the method's development, clinically observed symptomatology had been a far more important basis for the categorization and treatment of disease, and "neurosis" had been an adequate term for nervous conditions of various kinds. With a shift in emphasis toward anatomical lesions and the importance of their localization, the concept of neurosis became problem-

<sup>7</sup> C. Goetz, annotator and trans., *Charcot, the Clinician: The Tuesday Lessons* (New York: Raven, 1987), 24–25, 110.

<sup>8</sup> S. Freud, "Charcot" (1893), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1962), 3:12. Hereafter cited as SE.

atic, because few actual anatomical lesions could be found to account for them. By the time Charcot turned his attention to hysteria, he had been using the clinicoanatomic method on other disorders for many years and with great success. Diseases such as tabes yielded up the most precise information to Charcot's method. Yet hysteria proved more perplexing, because as a *grande névrose*, it gave no evidence of pathological lesions.

In his inaugural lecture in 1882 for the new university chair of diseases of the nervous system, Charcot discussed how conditions such as hysteria appeared to the physician:

Epilepsy, chorea, hysteria . . . come to us like so many Sphinxes. . . . These symptomatic combinations deprived of anatomical substratum, do not present themselves to the mind of the physician with that appearance of solidity, of objectivity, which belong to affections connected with an appreciable organic lesion.

There are some even who see in several of these affections only an assemblage of odd incoherent phenomena inaccessible to analysis, and which had better, perhaps, be banished to the category of the unknown. It is hysteria which especially comes under this sort of proscription.<sup>9</sup>

To account for the origins of hysteria, Charcot devised the concept of "dynamic lesions," or psychologically traumatic events. These he assigned, however, the limited role of *agents provocateurs*, capable of catalyzing a hereditary propensity for nervous disease. His view of exactly *what* was inherited remained relatively ill-defined and untested by comparison to the precise picture of symptoms yielded by his observational strategy. In his development of elaborate family trees to trace various forms of neurological "degeneracy," he did not consider those familial and sociological experiences that affected people at early ages psychologically rather than through bloodlines—a position to which Freud ultimately strongly objected.<sup>10</sup> In his clinical demonstrations with patients, Charcot regularly overruled his patients' pronouncements about actual predisposing experiences in favor of his own hereditary explanations.<sup>11</sup> The importance Charcot and his colleagues gave heredity constituted, in their view, a justification for detailed case histories; these histories were taken with the purpose of providing crucial information about family history relevant to the study of hereditary transmission of neurological disease.

<sup>9</sup> J.-M. Charcot, *Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System*, vol. 3, trans. T. Savill (London: New Sydenham Society, 1889), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Gelfand.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., the case presented in chap. 1 of Goetz, annotator and trans.

Charcot, like his predecessor Briquet, insisted that "hysteria is governed, in the same way as other morbid conditions, by rules and laws, which attentive and sufficiently numerous observations always permit us to establish."<sup>12</sup> By repeated scrutiny he developed a clinical picture of hysteria that conformed to rules and laws in much the same way as the other diseases he studied. In hysteria, the typical convulsive attack was preceded by the "aura"—a group of premonitory symptoms including palpitations, nervous cough, yawning, and the *globus hystericus*, a sensation of obstruction in the throat. Sharp pains in the ovaries were often present in this stage as well. The epileptoid stage marked the beginning of the attack proper and tended to last for a few minutes, although its duration and tempo varied. In the first epileptoid subphase, the "tonic phase," the patient's arms and legs stretched and oscillated violently. In the "stertorous phase," the patient fell backward and lost consciousness, breathing weakened, the neck swelled, and the mouth foamed. The muscles then relaxed and normal respiration resumed.

The second stage was named the "period of clownism" and was characterized by rapid movements of two possible sorts: the *arc de cercle* (as was seen in tetanus) and rhythmic chorea. The third stage in Charcot's series was the *attitudes passionnelles*. Though this stage differed critically from the preceding two stages in that it introduced the "psychical element," Charcot's description of it, like his account of the other stages, centered on visible physiognomic signs. The duration of this period varied, and the patient's outbursts, remonstrances, and conversations with hallucinated interlocutors were often repeated several times before the entire attack subsided. In some patients a fourth stage was recorded, a "posthysterical derangement" that lasted for several hours or days. The patient suffered a delirium during which the thoughts and ideas of the *attitude passionnelles* were repeatedly expressed.

As is clear from his clinical description of hysteria, Charcot's characterization of the disorder relied upon visually observable signs, through which its fundamental structure was deemed detectable. Charcot announced in 1882 that "an attack of hysteria major . . . is reduced at the present time to a very simple formula. Four periods succeed each other in the complete attack with mechanical regularity. . . . In the attack, . . . nothing is left to chance, everything follows definite rules—always the same whether the case is met within private or hospital practice, in all countries, all times, all races, in short universally."<sup>13</sup> Yet this "universal" sequence of stages that Charcot constructed was later discredited as being due to the witting or unwitting mimicry by hysterics of the seizures they

<sup>12</sup> Charcot, *Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System*, 3:13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

had observed by epileptic patients with whom they shared the ward.<sup>14</sup> Thus, although the structural and social conditions of the ward played a role in producing the behaviors associated with hysteria, this role was overlooked by Charcot in his use of close, minute observation to develop his clinical description of the disease.

*Visual method, photography, and art in the clinical enterprise*

For anyone trying to understand Charcot's model of hysteria, it is important to examine the primary method used by the Salpêtrière doctors: visual observation. "To gaze, to look, to keep looking, always: thus only one comes to *see*. Charcot's penetrating observation [and his] precise look, often resulted in precious discoveries, revelations of illness unknown until then"—this was how Henri Meige described Charcot's method and its results.<sup>15</sup> Charcot relied on a natural and cultivated gift for seeing. Since early childhood he had decorated the carriages his father built, and he spent much of his reclusive and studious adolescence drawing. When he was eighteen, his father offered to sponsor his education as either a painter or a doctor; Charcot chose medicine.

The attention Charcot paid to visual information derived not only from his natural gifts, but from his concept of the scientist and of scientific objectivity. Two of his students wrote: "Meticulous clinical scrutiny, particularly of a visual type, was at the root of all Charcot's discoveries. The artist in him, who went hand in hand with the physician, played an interesting part in these discoveries."<sup>16</sup> Seeing provided the appropriate image for discovering: Freud remembered Charcot as saying that "the greatest satisfaction a man could have was to see something new—that is, to recognize it as new; and he remarked again and again on the difficulty and value of this kind of 'seeing.'"<sup>17</sup> According to Freud, Charcot answered a theoretical objection to his observational findings with the comment, "La théorie, c'est bon, mais ça n'empêche pas d'exister" (Theory is good, but it doesn't keep something from existing).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In his lecture "The Mental State of Hystericals" in 1925, P. Janet retrospectively surmised that Charcot's description of the *grande attaque* was not stable but in fact highly variable in terms of both the number of stages represented in the actual attacks and their order of occurrence (see Owen, 66). Charcot, Janet said, "described a type of hysteria which disappeared with him" (*The Major Symptoms of Hysteria: Fifteen Lectures Given in the Medical School of Harvard University* [New York: Macmillan, 1925], 21).

<sup>15</sup> H. Meige, *Charcot—Artiste* (Paris: Masson, 1925), 13–15.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Guillaum (n. 6 above), 51.

<sup>17</sup> SE, 3:12.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:139; *ibid.*, 3:13. Charcot's emphasis on visual observation was related to his pride in the approach of French clinical medicine, superior in his view to the abstract theorizing and contrived laboratory study of the Germans. Gelfand (n. 5 above).

The visual observation that characterized Charcot's method of diagnosing his patients often came at the expense of direct interaction. His laudatory biographer Guillaín, a pupil of several of Charcot's own students, describes how Charcot discontinued examining patients at bedside soon after his appointment at the Salpêtrière in 1862. Instead, Guillaín writes, Charcot "spent the entire morning in his office, and had the patients brought to him one by one. In 1881, when he was appointed clinical professor of diseases of the nervous system, he rarely visited the wards of the hospital and did not leave his own office except on rare occasions to go to the autopsy room, to his laboratory of pathologic anatomy, or to his ophthalmologic office."<sup>19</sup>

Guillaín quotes further from a description by two of Charcot's students, A. Souques and H. Meige:

He would seat himself near a table and immediately call for the patient who was to be studied. The patient then was completely undressed. The intern would read a clinical summary of the case, while the master listened attentively. Then there was a long silence, during which Charcot looked, kept looking at the patient while tapping his hand on the table. His assistants, standing close together, waited anxiously for a word of enlightenment. Charcot continued to remain silent. After a while he would request the patient to make a movement; he would induce him to speak; he would ask that his reflexes be examined and that his sensory responses be tested. And then again silence, the mysterious silence of Charcot. Finally he would call for a second patient, examine him like the first one, call for a third patient, and always without a word, silently making comparisons between them.<sup>20</sup>

For the clinicians at the Salpêtrière, photography provided the ideal method for accurately recording symptoms and their sequence. In their application of photographic method to medical study, these doctors belonged to a recently established tradition. Almost as soon as photography was invented, it had been applied to medical subject matter. The first photographer of madness, Hugh W. Diamond, had exclaimed in 1856 that "the Photographer secures with unerring accuracy the external phenomena of each passion, as the really certain indication of internal derangement."<sup>21</sup> Albert Londe, the director of the photographic service of

<sup>19</sup> Guillaín, 51.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. As the pronouns attest, some of Charcot's patients, including some hysterical patients, were men.

<sup>21</sup> H. W. Diamond, "On the Application of Photography to the Physiognomic and Mental Phenomena of Insanity" (paper presented to the Royal Society of Medicine, Lon-

the Salpêtrière in the 1880s and 1890s, wrote that "the photographic plate is the true retina of the scientist."<sup>22</sup> In 1888, countering a view that hysterical phenomena might be produced by his own suggestion, Charcot exclaimed, "But in truth I am nothing but a photographer; I register what I see."<sup>23</sup> Photography was thus established as a more perfect extension of the clinician's eye, a means of recording objective truth and knowledge.

Charcot found in photography the appropriate tool for representing the distillation of general symptom characteristics from the observation of many cases. By capturing various hysterical poses on film and then superimposing negatives from different cases, a general picture of the syndrome was created that expunged individual difference.<sup>24</sup> Hysteria, the Sphinx of disorders, presented a challenge to the creation of a uniform clinical picture. But by carefully cataloging symptoms in sequence, Charcot was able to use documentary photographic evidence to ensure the veracity of his universal sequence of stages.

By far the most carefully rendered and complete series of photographs in the *Iconographie* is that of "Augustine," a patient who arrived at the Salpêtrière in October 1875, when she was fifteen and one-half years old.<sup>25</sup> We can see in her series how the photographic plates are generally sequenced to conform to Charcot's theory of the course of a hysterical attack. The series has seventeen plates in all, beginning with a picture of Augustine fully clothed in the "Etat normal" (normal state), staring out at the viewer with an arresting gaze. These are followed by "Debut de l'attaque" (beginning of the attack) and two manifestations of "Tétanisme" (tetanism). The next ten plates represent the "Attitudes passionnelles": "Menace" (threat) (two), "Appel" (call), "Supplication amoureuse" (amorous supplication), "Erotisme" (erotism), "Extase" (ecstasy) (two) (fig. 1), "Hallucination de l'ouïe" (auditory hallucination), "Crucifiement" (crucifixion), and "Moquerie" (teasing). (The eleventh plate, not in sequence, depicts another aspect of the "Debut d'une attaque" [fig. 2], the extension of the tongue.) The final two images show the contractures of limbs (figs. 3 and 4).

The entire arrangement of photographs provides, in effect, a rendering of a "perfect attack," as seen from an omniscient view. We can witness the careful fashioning of this representation of the attack in a variety of

don, May 22, 1856), reprinted in S. Gilman, *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origins of Psychiatric Photography* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976), 20.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in G. Didi-Huberman, *Invention de l'hystérie: Charcot et l'iconographie de la Salpêtrière* (Paris: Macula, 1982), 35. Translations from the French are mine unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>23</sup> J.-M. Charcot, *Leçons du Mardi à la Salpêtrière* (Paris: Aux Bureaux du Progrès Médical, 1887-90), 178.

<sup>24</sup> For a more extensive description of this process, see Didi-Huberman, 51.

<sup>25</sup> *IPS* (n. 1 above), 2:123-86.





**FIG 1** *Attitudes passionnelles—extase* (1878). (Plate 23, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, vol. 2.)

ways. First, in the text of Augustine's case itself, the display of the full sequence of hysterical symptoms is quite rare. Augustine is plagued by "incomplete" or "abortive" attacks; on March 9, her report documents thirty-five attacks, on March 17, forty-three attacks, and on March 18, sixty attacks.<sup>26</sup> Such a superabundance of hysterical symptoms suggests a more frenzied and chaotic expression than is depicted by the orderly sequence of photographs. In light of the variability in manifestations of symptoms, and the recorded difficulty with which an attack could be accurately observed, the arranged presentation of the stages of attacks in the photographs appears as a contrivance intended to support the medical veracity of their fixed sequence.

The photographs also validate Charcot's model of hysteria by giving fixed physiognomic, psychological, and medical content to the variable emotional states of the *attitudes passionnelles*. These states are actually

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.



**FIG 2** *Debut d'une attaque—cri.* (Plate 28, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, vol. 2.)

marked by variable duration and involve subjective utterances. Yet these fluctuating moods and expressions are presented as symptoms that share the stability of such neurological symptoms as "*tétanisme*" and "*contractures*." The very naming of the *attitudes passionnelles* ("passional attitudes" or "poses") renders primarily visual a subjectively meaningful state. The meaning of these variable states was further fixed through the use of captions, which ostensibly identified, but in fact constructed, the specific meaning of each gesture. Finally, the poses present as stereotyped depictions of emotion what were probably witnessed as chaotic gestures. In fact, the style of the photographs has much less in common with other early photographs of mental patients than with the theatrical portraiture of the day.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> To observe their kinship to theatrical portraiture, see E. A. McCauley, A. A. E. *Disderi and the Carte de Visite Portrait Photograph* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985).



**FIG 3** *Hystéro-épilepsie—contracture.* (Plate 29, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, vol. 2.)

Charcot explicitly believed that his photographs satisfied both an artistic tradition and a scientific demand. Commenting on the series of photographs by Albert Londe in his lecture "On Six Cases of Hysteria in the Male Subject," Charcot said: "All this part of the seizure is very fine, if I may so express myself, and every one of these details deserves to be fixed by the process of instantaneous photography. . . . You see that from the point of view of art they leave nothing to be desired, and moreover they are very instructive."<sup>28</sup>

The *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* was by no means the only visual documentation of clinical material produced by Charcot and his colleagues. In the late 1880s, with others, Charcot's collaborator

<sup>28</sup> J.-M. Charcot, *Clinical Lectures on Certain Diseases of the Nervous System*, trans. E. P. Hurd (Detroit: George S. Davis, 1888), 129. A. Rouillé and B. Marbot provide the following quote from Albert Londe: "Medical photography had great importance from the didactic point of view, especially benefitting the doctors, but the sick person who was used as subject of observation did not benefit from it at all" (*Le corps et son image: Photographies du dix-neuvième siècle* [Paris: Contrejour, 1986], 60).



**FIG 4** *Hystéro-épilepsie—contracture.* (Plate 30, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, vol. 2.)

Richer produced the *Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, “clinical picture books” that were half case histories and half discussions and reproductions from the Great Masters.<sup>29</sup> In *Les démoniaques dans l’art* (1887), Charcot and Richer argue that the portrayal of hysterics by photography offers a contemporary equivalent of the Great Masters’ portrayal of “maniacs.” They also state their view of the relation of artistic and scientific observation:

Every resource is lacking to the painter, sculptor, actor, outside the exact observation of nature. For it does not suffice simply to deform

<sup>29</sup> P. Richer, G. de la Tourette, and A. Londe, *Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lecroqnier & Babé, 1888–89). The phrase “clinical picture books” is drawn from Debora L. Silverman’s highly informative history *Art Nouveau in Fin de Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 94. I am also indebted to Silverman for biographical information on Charcot’s youth.

things as pleases you and to make things strange as you see fit; beneath this apparent incoherence there is a hidden reason that arises from a morbid process, and, in the nature of the deformations of the parts or in the contortions of the whole, as well as in the order and grouping of all these phenomena, one finds, just as is demonstrated by our studies of the works of ancient and modern masters, the indisputable signs of a pre-established order, all the constancy and inflexibility of a scientific law.<sup>30</sup>

Since Charcot viewed artists and scientists alike as faithful renderers of a "pre-established order," the use of painterly techniques to retouch his photographs probably seemed a necessary enhancement rather than a selective distortion. The alignment of Augustine's photographs with representational traditions in art is effected through both the application of paint and the use of pose. A striking feature of the series taken as a whole is the liberal use of white paint or gouache on the surfaces of the drapery, and in some cases on Augustine's hair. Paint may have been applied in some cases to compensate for variable depth of field or badly focused shots; however, its application constitutes an aesthetic choice.<sup>31</sup> The application of paint to the drapery creates a sculptural effect, particularly in plates 16, 21, 28 (fig. 2), and 30 (fig. 4). These images, ostensibly taken at the precise moment of a hysterical attack, look timeless. They are made weighty and solid, and Augustine, surrounded by her heavy drapery, is imbued with static permanence. The addition of paint creates a contrast in dimensions and surfaces that renders Augustine's skin comparatively soft and luminous. Her vitality becomes tender and seductive in juxtaposition with the painted fabric. The photographs belie the prevalent notion of hysteria as an illness almost defined by the changeability of its manifestations.

The photographs of Augustine's *attitudes passionnelles* evoke traditional religious and erotic depictions of women. Plates 29 and 30 (figs. 3 and 4) offer a particularly interesting convergence of medical and aesthetic concerns. In these two images, Augustine gazes out at us; in plate 29 (fig. 3), her frank stare complements the frontal exposure of her body parts. Her body is posed to be viewed straight on, presumably so that the contracture may be fully inspected in an image offering the best opportunity for clinical observation. The perspective of the body is at odds with that of the chair and floor. The chair seems dwarfed by her, and her appearance of abnormality is heightened since the distortion of

<sup>30</sup> J.-M. Charcot and P. Richer, *Les démoniaques dans l'art* (Paris: V. A. Delahaye & E. Lecrosnier, 1887), 109.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Benjamin writes of the ways photographs were made to appear more artistic through the "arts of retouching." See "Walter Benjamin's Short History of Photography," trans. P. Patton, *Artforum* (February 1977), 46–51. I am grateful to Martha Sandweiss, director of the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, for information on the history of photography.

the contracture is rendered more extreme by the inconsistency of planes. At the same time, her exposed flesh heightens her apparent vulnerability and seductiveness. Her bareness, the exposure of as many body surfaces as possible, and the angles at which these body parts meet each other, fulfill the demands of medical viewing and, at the same time, combine with Augustine's gaze to create an erotic allure. In plate 30 (fig. 4), medical and artistic concerns are in tension. The scientific rationale for Augustine's position is problematic, for the contracture would be better displayed if the disfigurement of the shoulder joint were not incorporated into a familiar posture of feminine seduction. The composition of plate 30 demonstrates for us, however, the subordination of medical to aesthetic concerns through its use of a stock female display pose.

The sexual content of the *attitudes passionnelles*, and the suggestiveness of their portrayal, are particularly interesting in light of Charcot's repeated statements that hysteria was not a disorder of sexuality at all. In an 1892 article, he and P. Marie wrote: "As to the sexual life, we protest against the opinion universally adopted by the public that all hysterical women have a tendency to lubricity, almost bearing on nymphomania. Far from this, our opinion founded on the observation of numerous hysterical females in the Salpêtrière is that hysterical women are less sexual than sane and normal individuals; we may even add that hysterical patients with total anesthesia show absolute indifference to intercourse."<sup>32</sup>

In *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud would excuse his own initial inattention to the sexual dimension of hysteria by saying, "I had come fresh from the school of Charcot, and I regarded the linking of hysteria with the topic of sexuality as a sort of insult—just as the women patients themselves do."<sup>33</sup> The contradiction between the photographic representations and Charcot's stated observations might have been resolved through attention to the actual effects of sexual trauma; it might have been possible, for instance, to discover in the experience of sexual trauma the reasons why hysterics both sought attention and showed "absolute indifference to intercourse." Yet the Salpêtrière doctors could only have gained such an understanding through listening to their patients' words.

### *The treatment of verbal information*

In his renowned "Tuesday Lessons," Charcot demonstrated the extemporaneous application of his clinical technique.<sup>34</sup> Examining a

<sup>32</sup> J.-M. Charcot and P. Marie, "Hysteria," in *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*, ed. D. H. Tuke (London: Churchill, 1892).

<sup>33</sup> SE (n. 8 above), 2:260.

<sup>34</sup> Charcot's case presentations were not, in fact, always extemporaneous. Although the Tuesday Lessons were promoted as Charcot's exposure to cases he had never seen before, in fact they were often cases he had seen at one point or another. For more information on the structure of Charcot's clinical presentations, see Goetz's preface and introduction to *Charcot, the Clinician* (n. 7 above).

woman in order to arrive at a differential diagnosis of epilepsy or hysteria, he says:

Let us press again on the hysterogenic point. Here we go again. Occasionally subjects even bite their tongue, but this would be rare. Look at the arched back, which is so well described in the textbooks.

*Patient:* Mother, I am frightened.

*Charcot:* Note the emotional outburst. If we let things go unabated, we will soon return to the epileptoid behavior. Now we have a bit of tranquility, of resolution, followed by a type of static contracted posture. I consider this latter deformity as an accessory phenomenon to the basic attack. (*The patient cries again: "Oh! Mother."*)

*Charcot:* Again, note these screams. You could say it is a lot of noise over nothing. True epilepsy is much more serious and also much more quiet."<sup>35</sup>

In its implicit linking of epilepsy's seriousness to an absence of subjective outbursts, this vignette suggests Charcot's view of the status, significance, and usefulness of patients' talk.

The case history of Augustine offers a vivid array of subjective information, remarkable for how uneasily it is fitted into the overarching biological-hereditary framework its authors attempt to provide. The case history opens with an exposition of the topic of primary medical interest (menstruation) and a summary specifying the topics to be covered. Bourneville offers this description of Augustine's appearance upon her arrival at the hospital: "L . . . [her name is given several different ways within the case] is blonde, tall, and strong for her age, and gives every appearance of a pubescent girl. She is active, intelligent, affectionate, impressionable, but capricious, loving to attract attention. She is coquettish, takes a great deal of care with her toilette, and with fixing her hair, which is abundant, arranging it sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, with ribbons, bright ones, making her especially happy."<sup>36</sup>

The case goes on to record the results of neurological examination and Augustine's symptoms (her aura, her digestive functions, and breathing). A year and a half of her stay in the Salpêtrière is recorded over thirty-six pages, detailing her periods, attacks, and treatment, and illustrated by the photographs. Fragments of her *périodes de délire* are given in the context of the course of her attacks. In the *périodes de délire*, Augustine engages

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 105–6.

<sup>36</sup> IPS (n. 1 above), 2:127–28.

in what Bourneville calls her "bavardage" (chattering or gossip).<sup>37</sup> "More expansive" than the other patients, her "veritable delirium of words" occupies more than seven pages of fine print. In her hallucinations, she converses with what the doctors at the Salpêtrière call her "Invisibles," a term that refers to her hallucinated characters while inadvertently suggesting the workings of her mind, hidden from the observational techniques of the Salpêtrière doctors.

Augustine's history, entitled "Antécédents," supplies the lurid details of her young life. While she is a student at a religious school away from home, the husband of a woman she knows tries to rape her. She returns to her family in Paris on her vacation, where she meets Mr. C., her mother's employer. Her mother compels her to kiss this man and call him her father. She is then placed in his home, under the pretext of teaching his children to sew and sing. Lodged in a small isolated back room, Augustine is visited at night by Mr. C., "who was not on good terms with his wife," and who attempts to rape her twice without success. The third time, "[Mr.] C . . . after having made all sorts of promises shine before her eyes, having offered her pretty dresses, etc., seeing that she did not want to give in, threatened her with a razor; taking advantage of her fright, he made her drink a liqueur, undressed her, threw her on the bed, and had complete relations."<sup>38</sup>

Afterward, Augustine lost blood, "had pain in her genitals and was unable to walk." Her doctor thought she had begun her period. At this time Augustine was thirteen and a half. Soon thereafter she had her first hysterical attack.

Following these events, Augustine runs into Mr. C. on other occasions; he threatens her and thereby provokes renewed attacks. She is placed with an old woman as a chambermaid, at which time her brother introduces her to two of his friends, with whom she has sexual relations. She also realizes that Mr. C. was her mother's lover and that her mother procured her for him.

As her story unfolds, Augustine's delirious account is riddled with references to her mother who betrayed her, her father who did not protect her, her employer who raped her, and her brother who procured her for his friends. She dwells repeatedly, incessantly, on her own blamelessness, articulating her efforts to fend off unwelcome advances and to protect herself from pregnancy. In reference to Mr. C. and the rape itself, she says:

Then, I had Mr. C. . . ; after that I would do well to tell Madame . . . to tell papa . . . but Mr. C. told me that he would kill me. What

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 158, 172.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 126.



he showed me, I didn't know what it meant. He spread my legs . . . I didn't know that it was an animal that was going to bite me . . . I'm going to go out every night because he wants to go to bed with me. He told me that he would kill me. He hurts me. . . . He says that later on it will make me feel good. . . . But it's a sin. . . . I will be forced to tell papa. . . . That's how people make children. What! a baby! If Mr. C. . . were to make me a baby. . . . And mother claimed that she was putting me in a safe house!<sup>39</sup>

Battling with her brother Antonio about the sexual goings-on between herself and his friend, she says: "Antonio, you are going to repeat what he told you . . . that he had touched me. . . . But I didn't want it. . . . Antonio, you lie! . . . It's true, he had a snake in his trousers, he wanted to put it in my stomach, but he didn't even find me. . . . Me, I'm a lunatic? . . . Antonio, you're joking. I'm going to smack you! (*Look of contempt and disgust*)."<sup>40</sup>

The centrality of sexual trauma in hysteria is vividly suggested by these utterances; in the medical accounts, however, it finds expression only in the elaborate attention paid to symptoms involving female reproductive biology. The doctors assiduously note, for instance, the onset, heaviness, and length of menstrual periods and observe a relation between periods and hysterical attacks. Although these facts and correlations are carefully recorded and an enormous amount of evidence about sexuality is laid out, the doctors do not cast these as correspondences whose meaning is mediated by subjective experience.

This simultaneous fascination with, and neglect of, the relation between sexual functions and convulsive attacks is shown more clearly still in the case of "Geneviève." "We insisted above," the authors write, "on the relation that existed between *menstrual periods* and the *attacks*. We must add again, that *sexual relations*, at least at first, diminished the convulsive crises, of which the two *pregnancies* had augmented the number, whereas *breastfeeding* appeared to lead to a certain amelioration."<sup>41</sup>

The report reads as if biological signs had self-evident and unequivocal meaning, and it does not address meanings for which Geneviève's verbal utterances provide a wealth of suggestions. Her biographical information reveals that she is an adopted child whose wet nurse died in her first months of life. Her betrothed dies when she is fifteen; at sixteen she is sexually approached by her employer. Soon after, her attacks begin and she is put in a *hôtel-Dieu* where the nuns think she looks pregnant and punish her. She is transferred to a mental hospital, where she cuts off her

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 1:94. The emphasis is in the original.

right nipple. Geneviève goes from asylum to asylum, ending up at the Salpêtrière. She then escapes to Montbard, where Prussian soldiers hold her: "During eight days she had relations with one (?) Prussian officer, relations that resulted in a second pregnancy."<sup>42</sup> When she is returned to the Salpêtrière, Bourneville remarks that Geneviève's "attacks were very numerous and very strong during pregnancy," although she "insists that during the six weeks of breastfeeding she did not have one attack."<sup>43</sup> When her child dies at six weeks, the attacks resume.

At the Salpêtrière, "her talk rolls on without cease about the most striking events of her existence, which are the object of her preoccupation in her normal state."<sup>44</sup> In her hallucinations she complains that serpents and vipers are penetrating her stomach and making her suffer; she says that "if she refuses to eat, it's because she doesn't want to feed all those beasts."<sup>45</sup> Her imagery resonates with Augustine's reference to the erect penis of her brother's friend as "a snake in his trousers" that he wants to put in her stomach. The similarity of Augustine's and Geneviève's fears might have suggested to the Salpêtrière clinicians a common pool of misinformation, sexual theories, or fantasies whose meaning could be explored. However, hereditary-biological explanations provided a rationale for not interrogating these connections further.

Most critically, perhaps, the doctors did not take into account the emotions and motives of their women patients, or the interaction of their patients' emotional agendas and their own investigative procedures. Describing the social structure of the hospital wards, Bourneville writes: "G. is jealous of another sick person A. . . , with whom we are engaged for the purposes of research on magnetism, hypnotism, etc. Mr. Charcot addressed a sharp reprimand to her. She was profoundly mortified by it. Under the influence of this strong emotion the spinal pain completely disappeared and the attacks could no longer be provoked."<sup>46</sup>

This passage hints at the fraught emotional milieu in which the research was being conducted. It suggests triangular jealousies between patients and doctors, competition for attention, and direct links between symptomatology and emotional experiences. Yet G.'s response is not discussed in this light; instead, the spheres in which the hysterical patient's motives and feelings are most readily invoked include simulation, fraudulence, and the "natural" coquetry of the hysteric.

The question of fraudulence was a pressing one at the Salpêtrière, related as it was to the establishment of hysteria's legitimacy. Charcot

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:67. The (?) is in the original.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:56.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:205.

betrays in his *Lectures on Diseases of the Nervous System* a mistrust of the patients' behavior altogether different from his unquestioning faith in visual evidence: "Simulation . . . is met with at every step in the history of hysteria. One finds oneself acknowledging the amazing craft, sagacity, and perseverance which women . . . especially under the influence of this great neurosis . . . will put into play . . . especially when a physician is to be the victim."<sup>47</sup> This pronouncement reveals an inconsistency in Charcot's opinion of the relationship of women and hysteria; for although he generally insisted that hysteria was not specific to women—contrary to a view that had prevailed since antiquity—here he implies that hysteria amounts to an exacerbation of female nature.

The hysteric's purported coquetry is illustrated in various descriptions of patients. One is described in this way: "Her face was quite sweet. Her air is somewhat nonchalant. Like all hysterics, she likes attention."<sup>48</sup> Of Augustine, Bourneville writes: "Everything about her, moreover, announces the hysteric. . . . It goes without saying that the sight of men pleases her, that she likes to show herself and wants them to pay her attention."<sup>49</sup>

The emphasis on coquetry by the doctors at the Salpêtrière had an ironic twist: the hysterical woman patient's display of exaggerated symptoms and sexual charms itself represented a threat to the truth derived from the visible realm of objective observation and the photographic lens. Yet it was precisely these exhibitionistic qualities that fitted her for participation in the enterprise of photographic representation. Her "hysterical tendencies" toward self-display and adornment were not simply recorded but, rather, encouraged when she was placed in front of the camera's eye for the purposes of medical documentation. In this meeting of the patient's desires and the doctor's intent, the question of "objective" knowledge through visual representation in photographs was thrown into confusion. The doctor's interpretation was that her desire for attention and self-display were typical hysterical signs; yet for the patient who had suffered severe trauma in the spheres of love and loyalty, the treatment of her illness and the "doctoring" of her photographs may both have been expressions of the attention and care she had been deprived of in the past.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Charcot, *Clinical Lectures on Certain Diseases of the Nervous System* (n. 28 above), 230.

<sup>48</sup> *IPS* (n. 1 above), 2:190.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>50</sup> This hidden dynamic by which the needs of both doctor and patient are filled provides, Michel Foucault writes, an instance where "the sign no longer speaks the natural language of disease; it assumes shape and value only within the question posed by medical investigation. There is nothing, therefore, to prevent it being solicited and almost fabricated by medical investigation. It is no longer that which is spontaneously stated by the disease itself; it is the meeting point of the gestures of research and the sick organ-

## Freud

### *Background*

Richard Wollheim has written that "Freud's life work . . . was a research into the deafness of the mind."<sup>51</sup> Ultimately for Freud, the deafness of the mind revealed itself in a special way in the symptomatology of hysteria: memories of events the conscious mind could not tolerate were expressed in physical symptoms. It was this commemoration of events by symptoms that Freud and Breuer sought to describe in their well-known aphorism, "Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences."<sup>52</sup> Freud's conceptualization of hysteria diverged from Charcot's, and it depended on a very different method—that of listening—for its construction.

Though Freud was a neuropathologist by training, his interest in medicine was by no means narrow or even particularly focused. His family noted in him a "lack of genuine medical temperament,"<sup>53</sup> and he took seven years to finish his medical studies, having plunged himself instead into the study of zoology, biology, and philosophy at university. A critical figure in Freud's philosophical training was Franz Brentano, with whom Freud studied for five semesters.<sup>54</sup> For Brentano the science of psychology stood on ground as firm as the natural sciences; in terms of method, Brentano advocated "a scientific working back and forth between the evidence of the inner 'subjective' world and the outer 'objective' world"—which, as McGrath points out, marked the mature method of Freud as well.<sup>55</sup>

Freud's wide-ranging interests, and his ambition to use medicine as a path to "realizing his intense curiosity in nature and human relations," were consonant with an interest in establishing the relationship of biological and psychological phenomena. With specific regard to hysteria, Freud's goal was to establish "a *combined psychophysiological basis* for both hypnotic and hysterical phenomena."<sup>56</sup> This is why Freud sought to study with Charcot, the reigning expert on the neurological aspects of hysteria.

ism" (*The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* [New York: Vintage, 1975], 162). Also see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1980), 1:55–56 and 111–12, for specific discussion of the Salpêtrière.

<sup>51</sup> R. Wollheim, *Sigmund Freud* (New York: Viking, 1971), 272.

<sup>52</sup> SE (n. 8 above), 2:7.

<sup>53</sup> S. Bernfeld, "Sigmund Freud, 1882–85," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 32 (1951): 204–17, esp. 204.

<sup>54</sup> The influence of Brentano's philosophy of psychology on Freud has been explored in great detail by W. J. McGrath in *Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>56</sup> F. Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* (New York: Basic, 1979), 50. Original emphasis.

Throughout his published references to Charcot, Freud lavished praise upon his mentor for his method of diagnosis and classification, as well as for his use of hypnosis, which had begun to suggest the importance of the "psychical element" in hysteria. In terms of method, Freud was deeply influenced by Charcot's combined use of anatomical knowledge and clinical experience.<sup>57</sup> In his obituary of Charcot in 1893, he lauded Charcot's special gifts: "He was not a reflective man, not a thinker: he had the nature of an artist—he was, as he himself said, a *visuel*, a man who sees."<sup>58</sup> Freud was also impressed by the fruitful transfer of Charcot's method from the study of organic diseases to the study of neuroses; he credited Charcot with having made clear the lawful nature of these phenomena.<sup>59</sup> Through Charcot's use of the archetype as a way of understanding clinical disorders, hysteria was, by Freud's account, "lifted out of the chaos of the neuroses, was differentiated from other conditions with similar appearance, and was provided with a symptomatology, which though sufficiently multifarious, nevertheless makes it impossible any longer to doubt the rule of law and order."<sup>60</sup> Further, Freud was influenced by Charcot's use of hypnosis, both for its therapeutic effects and for the legitimacy it conferred upon what was still regarded in some Viennese medical circles as quackery.

Between 1886, when Freud returned from Paris, and 1895, when *Studies on Hysteria* was published, Freud's views diverged from Charcot's in three important areas: the etiology of hysteria, the use of hypnosis, and clinical method.<sup>61</sup>

In looking to sexuality as the critical link between the psychological and physical aspects of hysteria, Freud rejected the explanations he had received from Charcot. Charcot had eschewed the importance of sexuality in hysteria and had revealed himself to be relatively uninterested in exploring possible points of contact between the physiological and psychological origins of hysteria. Charcot's lack of interest in the role of sexuality later appeared to Freud in a strange light. Freud recounts an

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., SE, 1:10 and 3:11–23.

<sup>58</sup> Freud, "Charcot" (n. 8 above), 3:9–23.

<sup>59</sup> Sulloway, 49.

<sup>60</sup> SE, 1:12.

<sup>61</sup> S. Freud, "Preface to the Translation of Charcot's Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System" (1886) in *ibid.*, 19–22, "Preface to the Translation of Bernheim's Suggestion" (1888), in *ibid.*, 73–88, "Hysteria" (1888), in *ibid.*, 39–59, "Hypnosis" (1891), in *ibid.*, 103–14, "Preface and Footnotes to Charcot's Tuesday Lectures" (1892–94), in *ibid.*, 131–46, "Some Points for a Comparative Study of Organic and Hysterical Motor Paralysis" (1893), in *ibid.*, 160–72, and "On the Psychical Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena" (1893), in *ibid.*, 3:25–39; J. M. Masson, ed., *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).

anecdote in his 1914 article, "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement":

At one of Charcot's evening receptions, I happened to be standing near the great teacher at a moment when he appeared to be telling Brouardel some very interesting story from his day's work. I hardly heard the beginning, but gradually my attention was seized by what he was saying. A young married couple from the far East: the woman a confirmed invalid: the man either impotent or exceedingly awkward. "*Tachez donc*," I hear Charcot repeating, "*je vous assure, vous y arriverez*" [Keep trying, I assure you, you'll get there]. Brouardel, who spoke less loudly, must have expressed his astonishment that symptoms such as the wife's could have been produced in such circumstances. For Charcot suddenly broke in with great animation, "*Mais, dans des cas pareils c'est toujours la chose génitale, toujours . . . toujours, toujours*" [In these kinds of cases, it's always a genital thing, always . . . always, always]; and he crossed himself with his arms over his stomach, hugging himself and jumping up and down on his toes several times in his own characteristic lively way. I know that for one second I was almost paralyzed with amazement and said to myself, "Well, but if he knows that, why does he never say so?" But the impression was soon forgotten; brain anatomy and the experimental induction of hysterical paralyses absorbed all available interest.<sup>62</sup>

Within his own developing psychological framework, Freud began to reinterpret some of the symptoms Charcot had observed. Reconceptualizing Charcot's *attitudes passionnelles*, Freud wrote: "The core of a hysterical attack, in whatever form it may appear, is a memory, the hallucinatory reliving of a scene which is significant for the onset of the illness. It is this event which manifests itself in a perceptible manner in the phase of '*attitudes passionnelles*'; but it is also present when the attack appears to consist only of motor phenomena."<sup>63</sup> In a letter to Fliess in late 1896, Freud devised a novel account of Charcot's *périodes de clownisme*: "The explanation of the phase of 'clownism' in Charcot's schema of [hysterical] attacks, lies in the perversion of the seducers who, by virtue of the compulsion to repeat what they did in their youth, obviously seek their satisfaction by performing the wildest capers, somersaults, and gri-

<sup>62</sup> SE (n. 8 above), 14:13-14.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 1:137.

maces."<sup>64</sup> Behaviors of hysterics were, to Freud, meaningful mimicry of traumatic past events.

Freud's overall dissatisfaction with, and shift away from, Charcot's method is evident in his 1893 view of Charcot's use of hypnotism: "The exclusively nosographical approach adopted at the School of the Salpêtrière was not suitable for a purely psychological subject. The restriction of the study of hypnosis to hysterical patients, the differentiation between major and minor hypnosis, the hypothesis of three stages of 'major hypnosis,' and their characterization by somatic phenomena—all this sank in the estimation of Charcot's contemporaries when Liébeault's pupil, Bernheim, set about constructing the theory of hypnotism on a more comprehensive psychological foundation and making suggestion the central point of hypnosis."<sup>65</sup>

Thus, Freud saw the approach of visual observation as simply inadequate to a "purely psychological subject" such as hysteria. This shift, combined with a change in his orientation to hypnosis, ushered in Freud's third critical divergence from Charcot, his use of a novel clinical-investigative method.

*Listening, speaking, and the use of words in "Studies on Hysteria"*

Freud visited Bernheim in Nancy in 1889 in order to perfect his hypnotic technique, but he soon became dissatisfied with the efficacy of suggestion and began experimenting with a method which, along the lines of Breuer's, used hypnotism to uncover memory of past events. Much earlier, in November 1882, Breuer had told Freud of his treatment of Anna O., which had been conducted between 1880 and 1882. Freud was extremely interested both by Breuer's use of hypnotism as a method of catharsis and by the young woman patient's response to it.

With Anna O., Breuer had found that hypnotism operated to reproduce the "hypnoid state" in which the symptoms first appeared. When Breuer returned her to her hypnoid state, she could recite the events that had originally brought on the symptom. In his treatment of Frau Emmy von N., which began in May of 1888 or 1889 and lasted a year, Freud used the cathartic method "to a large extent" for the first time.<sup>66</sup> His 1924 footnote to that case affirmed that he also used a great deal of direct therapeutic suggestion. His "first full-length analysis of hysteria,"<sup>67</sup> that of Fräulein Elisabeth von R., began in the fall of 1892, and the analysis of Miss Lucy R. began later that year. The fourth case study, that of Katha-

<sup>64</sup> Masson, ed., 218.

<sup>65</sup> SE, 3:22-23.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 2:105.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 139.

rina, is undated but occurred within the same time span. An exploration of the two most detailed cases, those of Emmy von N. and Elisabeth von R., offers a picture of the method Freud developed to investigate what he understood to be the *psychological* disorder of hysteria. Moreover, they emblemize Freud's approach to understanding and representing hysteria in the same way as Charcot's photographs emblemize his.<sup>68</sup>

Emmy von N. was a woman of about forty whose symptoms and personality interested Freud so greatly that, as he wrote, "I devoted a large part of my time to her and determined to do all I could for her recovery."<sup>69</sup> She was an exceptionally intelligent woman of "finely-cut features and noble character," who was able to conduct herself with great competence except during her bouts of hysteria. Freud visited her daily, usually twice, during the first three weeks of treatment at the nursing home where he had recommended she stay. Sometime in the course of Freud's first meeting with her, Emmy's coherent self-presentation and poised bearing gave way to "an expression of horror and disgust," and she exclaimed, "Keep still—Don't say anything—Don't touch me!" Freud conjectured that the words provided a "protective formula," an attempt to control her frightening thoughts.<sup>70</sup>

On the morning of May 10, as he massages Frau von N. (part of the acceptable practice of the day), Freud alleviates her doubt about an incident with Dr. Breuer, and her agitated tongue-clacking and grimaces stop. He remarks:

So each time, even while I am massaging her, my influence has already begun to affect her; she grows quieter and clearer in the head, and even without questioning under hypnosis can discover the cause of her ill-humor on that day. Nor is her conversation during the massage so aimless as would appear. On the contrary, it contains a fairly complete reproduction of the memories and new impressions which have affected her since our last talk, and it often leads on, in a quite unexpected way, to pathogenic reminiscences of which she unburdens herself without being asked to. It is as though she had adopted my procedure and was making use of our conversation, apparently unconstrained and guided by chance, as a supplement to her hypnosis.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> *Studies on Hysteria* is a joint work of Freud and Breuer, but here I am exploring two of Freud's cases. For a detailed summary of the two doctors' respective roles in producing the work, see J. Strachey, "Editor's Introduction," SE, 2:ix–xxviii.

<sup>69</sup> SE, 2:48.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 56. Strachey notes, "This is perhaps the earliest appearance of what later became the method of free association" (*ibid.*).



In some respects the passage contains in microcosm the development of Freud's technique. First, his "influence" begins to take hold without the necessity of actual hypnotism. His massage, his presence, and his attentiveness elicit her conversation, which, unlike the "babbling" of Charcot's patients, is not "so aimless as would appear." Frau von N. begins to recount her recent memories and impressions since their last talk and works her way back to pathogenic reminiscences. She herself makes use of the conversation for her own purposes, "without being asked to"; she thus participates in constructing the method in a context provided by Freud, a context that is, at least, not inimical to fluid self-expression.

When Freud does not provide Frau von N. with what she needs, she tells him. Asked about the meaning of each piece of her "protective formula," "she explained that when she had frightening thoughts she was afraid of their being interrupted in their course, because then everything would get confused and things would get even worse."<sup>72</sup> Two days later, Freud asks the hypnotized Emmy to remember by the next day why she had gastric pains; "She then said in a definitely grumbling tone that I was not to keep on asking her where this and that came from, but to let her tell me what she had to say. . . . (I saw now that the cause of her ill-humour was that she had been suffering from the residues of this story which had been kept back)."<sup>73</sup>

Freud realizes from this exchange that by directing the conversation, he has been creating an impediment to his patient's "free association." He takes her statements as evidence that his procedure has not been "carried out exhaustively enough."<sup>74</sup> By noting Frau von N.'s moods following their sessions and relating these to the exhaustiveness with which he carried out the catharsis, Freud draws a theoretical conclusion that symptoms are attached "not solely to the initial traumas but to a long chain of memories associated with them," which must likewise be dealt with through catharsis.<sup>75</sup> When Freud uses visual cues, it is to read in the patient's face whether she has truthfully divulged her entire story. Even though Freud might at first prefer to cut his patient's words short, he realizes the importance of thoroughly listening to all the patient needs to say if a cure is to be reached and his theory is to be proven.

Freud, like Charcot, did not see himself as a therapist. In a letter to Fliess dated April 2, 1896, Freud conveyed his own reluctant involvement in psychotherapy: "As a young man I knew no longing other than for philosophical knowledge, and now I am about to fulfill it as I move from

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 74, n. 1.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 75, n. 2.

medicine to psychology. I became a therapist against my will."<sup>76</sup> Freud may have had, at least initially, a distaste for therapeutics, but he recognized in therapy a process necessary to the study of the illness.

When Emmy von N. becomes fearful of how she will fare when her treatment ends, Freud reassures her, telling her that she has become healthier and suggesting "that she would get in the habit of telling her thoughts to someone she was on close terms with."<sup>77</sup> His injunction reveals the importance he attributes to the act of verbal unburdening for the hysteric. Freud also specifies a relational context for the unburdening—"someone she was on close terms with." He thereby suggests a fundamental similarity between the doctor's relationship to the patient and the patient's relationship to a friend or confidante in daily life.

In his treatment of Emmy von N., Freud further develops his opposition to Charcot's hereditary view of hysteria. He specifically objects to Charcot's insufficient distinction between hereditary predisposition to neurosis and the acquisition of nervous disease either through early childhood events or through the combination of trauma and inherited vulnerability.<sup>78</sup> Charcot's theory of the *famille névropathique*—"which, incidentally, embraces almost everything we know in the form of nervous diseases, organic and functional, systematic and accidental"<sup>79</sup>—was far too general and dismissive in Freud's view. Statements in the *Studies* of his opposition to the hereditary hypothesis show that Freud believed the issues Charcot deemed biological belonged instead in the realm of relationships. The issue of degeneracy, important to Charcot, is only relevant in cases where it impairs the ability of the patient to participate in the process of psychotherapy: "The procedure is not applicable at all below a certain level of intelligence, and it is made very much more difficult by any trace of feebleness of mind. . . . It is almost inevitable that their personal relation to him [the doctor] will force itself, for a time at least, unduly into the foreground. It seems, indeed, as though an influence of this kind on the part of the doctor is a *sine qua non* to a solution of the problem."<sup>80</sup> Here "influence" refers to hypnotic suggestion, and it hints at the concept of transference. Later in the chapter, Freud more fully addresses the centrality of the doctor-patient relationship: "I have already indicated [SE, 2: 266] the important part played by the figure of the physician in creating motives to defeat the psychical force of resistance. In not a few cases, especially with women and here it is a question of elucidating erotic trains of thought, the patient's cooperation becomes a

<sup>76</sup> Masson, ed. (n. 61 above), 180.

<sup>77</sup> SE (n. 8 above), 2:75.

<sup>78</sup> See, e.g., *ibid.*, 294, and 1:139.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:142–43.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:265.

personal sacrifice, which must be compensated by some substitute for love. The trouble taken by the physician and his friendliness have to suffice for such a substitute. If, now, this relation of the patient to the physician is disturbed, her cooperativeness fails, too."<sup>81</sup>

To counter the hereditary hypothesis, however, Freud did not simply offer a psychological one. He invoked the exemplary qualities of the hysterical patients themselves in order to break the equation of hysteria with degeneracy. In closing the case of Emmy von N., Freud writes: "The woman we came to know was an admirable one. The moral seriousness with which she views her duties, her intelligence and energy, which were no less than a man's, and her high degree of education and love of truth impressed both of us greatly; while her benevolent care for the welfare of all her dependents, humility of mind and the refinement of her manners revealed her qualities as a true lady as well. To describe such a woman as a 'degenerate' would be to distort the meaning of that word out of all recognition."<sup>82</sup>

Freud's legitimation of his psychological theory, then, was intertwined with the question of the status or worthiness of the patient. Freud lays great stress on the refinement and high social standing of Frau von N.; though she has a "more lively and uninhibited way of expressing her emotions than [is] usual with women of her education and race,"<sup>83</sup> she is a highly educated woman nonetheless. And, interestingly, the measure of her superiority is described in terms of her equality with a man. If man is the measure, then the extent to which she is not "degenerated" is the extent to which she equals a man precisely in those qualities where man is superior. Freud's repeated emphasis on Emmy's character, breeding, and general superiority not only serves to correct some prejudices (incrimination by association) against the victims of the disorder and against the disease, but also buttresses the utility of his particular method of cure.

Describing the difficulties and disadvantages of his psychotherapy later on in the *Studies*, Freud writes: "The procedure is laborious and time-consuming for the physician. It presupposes great interest in psychological happenings, but personal concern for the patients as well. I cannot imagine bringing myself to delve into the psychical mechanism of a hysteria in anyone who struck me as low-minded or repellent, and who, on closer examination, would not be capable of arousing human sympathy."<sup>84</sup> Freud brings out with admirable candor the link of compassion and interest (both qualities of a personal relationship) to a sense of

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

respect for the patient. Aside from the virtue of his forthright tone, however, his suggestion that probing the mind of someone "low-minded" would not be worthwhile is consistent with, and in some sense justifies, Charcot's failure to question his destitute women patients at the Salpêtrière. High-mindedness and, by implication, membership in "an educated and literate social class"<sup>85</sup> made Freud perceive his patients as less distant and their subjective worlds as less strange and repellent.

The case of Elisabeth von R. is the most consummately crafted tale of the *Studies* and provides the best early account of the relation between therapist and patient. Freud introduces the case with his first interview and shares with us the suspense of his initial ignorance about this young woman and her disease. He leads us through his difficulties in settling on a technique and his slow realization of "the connection between the events in her illness and her actual symptom."<sup>86</sup> Freud then unfolds a very long and involved family drama, following which he writes: "If we put greater misfortunes on one side and enter into a girl's feeling, we cannot refrain from deep human sympathy with Fraülein Elisabeth. But what shall we say of the purely medical interest of this tale of suffering and of its relations to her painful locomotor weakness, and of the chances of an explanation and cure afforded by our knowledge of these psychical traumas?"<sup>87</sup> In answer to his own question, Freud says that "the patient's confession was at first sight a great disappointment."<sup>88</sup> Her life seems too mundane to bring on hysterical symptomatology; the reasons for her symptom choice are far from clear. Like most physicians, Freud does not regard her experiences as sufficiently important to precipitate hysteria. Yet, instead of contenting himself with the common medical view that she is a constitutional hysteric, he inquires into the meaning of her symptoms: What kind of excitations led to them? What would her motives have been, and when had an association between "her painful mental impressions and the bodily pains" taken place? These are questions that can only be answered by information elicited from Elisabeth herself—information that is not always available to her, but which must be made so.

In striking contrast to Charcot's technique, Freud uses cues about what holds Elisabeth's interest as indications of what course to pursue. Thus, after investigating the different pains she has in her legs, he admits, "I did not pursue further the delimitation of zones of pain corresponding to different psychical determinants, since I found that the patient's attention was directed away from this subject."<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, xxx.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

Central both to the actual case and to its representation as a case history is Freud's explicit participation as one of the characters in the story. He attempts to achieve objectivity not through the eradication of his own presence but, rather, by carefully describing his own role and tracing the steps of his own logic. We are never allowed to forget his participation, since he often refers to his own questions and doubts about his technique, and continually inserts his own perspective on the conundrums raised by the case.

A major feature of Charcot's view of hysterics was an emphasis on hysterical dissimulation and the hysteric's goal of making the doctor a fool. Interestingly, Freud raises these same issues, but in the context of the relationship between doctor and patient. Proceeding first with his pressure technique, Freud finds that Elisabeth has made no confessions that have led to a cure. He remarks that "during this first period of her treatment she never failed to repeat that she was still feeling ill and that her pains were as bad as ever; and, when she looked at me as she said this with a sly look of satisfaction at my discomfiture, I could not help being reminded of old Herr von R.'s judgement about his favourite daughter—that she was often 'cheeky' and 'ill-behaved.' But I was obliged to admit that she was in the right."<sup>90</sup> Freud's self-disclosure makes clear the doctor's shared fallibility in the therapeutic enterprise. In this case as in others, Freud is ironic about his own ineptitude at pulling off a successful hypnosis. He gives dimension to the hysteric's obstinacy and wish to deceive by including his own role in the drama.

One of Freud's most quoted statements appears in the case of Elisabeth von R. and captures the essence of his innovative shift in method. He writes at the beginning of his "Discussion":

I have not always been a psychotherapist. Like other neuropathologists, I was trained to employ local diagnoses and electro-prognosis, and it still strikes myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science. I must console myself with the reflection that the nature of the subject is evidently responsible for this, rather than any preference of my own. The fact is that local diagnoses and electrical reactions lead nowhere in the study of hysteria, whereas a detailed description of mental processes such as we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enables me, with the use of a few psychological formulas, to obtain at least some kind of insight into the course of that affection.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 144–45.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 160–61.

In a familiar Freudian voice, he refers to his own training and orientation as a way to inform (and convince) the reader that he did not proceed from any natural desire to delve into the minds and lives of his women patients. Rather, he was reluctantly drawn there in response to the objective facts of the case. Similarly, he self-consciously refers to the product that has emerged from these investigations, case histories that "read like short stories" and "lack the serious stamp of science." He has listened to his patients, and their utterances have "dictated" to him an approach.

Although he almost apologizes for the narrative art of his account, its unorthodox form, it is precisely his worry about his role in constructing that account that is to his credit as a scientist. His innovative contribution operates in two related ways. The first is his inclusion of the subjective accounts of his patients in constructing his understanding of the disease. These early cases are marked by a relationship between doctor and patient in which both contribute to the building of the method, and both collaborate in the process of unearthing forgotten or repressed mnemonic origins of the illness. Freud recognizes, even at this formative stage, the mutual interest of the two participants as central, and the relation of patient and doctor as a fundamental precondition of, or obstruction to, therapeutic progress. We can see in the development of Freud's technique a profoundly altered relationship to the patient.

The second and parallel innovation is Freud's acknowledgment of his own subjective contribution, his own hand in constructing the account of hysteria he has presented. His surprise at digressing from "serious science" is conveyed in a rhetorical strategy used repeatedly throughout the *Studies*. By referring to the position adopted by his colleagues, and by then indicating what observations required him to diverge from their view, Freud conveys the necessity and inevitability of his new approach. For example, in a discussion of an eighteen-year-old patient, Freud writes:

To begin with I myself was unwilling to attach much importance to these details, and there can be no doubt that earlier students of hysteria would have been inclined to regard these phenomena as evidence of the stimulation of the cortical centres during a hysterical attack. It is true that we are ignorant of the locality of the centres for paraesthesias of this kind, but it is well known that such paraesthesias usher in partial epilepsy and constitute Charcot's sensory epilepsy. . . . But the explanation turned out to be a different one. When I had come to know the girl better I put a straight question to her as to what kind of thoughts came to her during these attacks. I told her not to be embarrassed and said that she

must be able to give an explanation of the two phenomena [facial pricking sensations and convulsive foot stretching].<sup>92</sup>

In this passage Freud moves from his initial emphasis (one shared by Charcot and others) on lesions and cortical stimulation to an explanation based on the causal role of the emotions and the therapeutic approach that must accompany this knowledge. He moves from a highly technical account of physiological symptoms to a question in plain language about the girl's own experience; thus he contrasts a specific biological diagnosis with a disarmingly simple remedy: "When I had come to know the girl better I put a straight question to her."

Just as Freud's treatment depended critically on talking and listening, the role of words was central both to the description of the disorder and to the disorder itself. In terms of his description of the disorder, Freud uses a number of similes in order to "throw light from different directions on a highly complicated topic which has never yet been represented."<sup>93</sup> In terms of his theory of the causes of the disorder, Freud sees words as critical to the process of symbolization, which he views as midway between conversion and autosuggestion. Examples of symbolization are drawn from the cases of Rosalia H., who hysterically lost her voice at having to suppress anger, and from Căcilie M., whose facial neuralgia appeared as an embodiment of a slight she had received ("a slap in the face").<sup>94</sup> Freud shows that as the centrally charged themes in the patient's affective life are tapped, the implicated organ, in his words, "joins in the conversation," adding credence to the view that the organ is in fact involved in a psychologically meaningful way.<sup>95</sup> In Freud's view meanings traverse the mind and body more easily than we think, and words—their expression, use, and arrangement—develop out of bodily experience more readily than we credit.<sup>96</sup> The fluid interchange between words and bodily symptoms defies previously constructed barriers in much the same way as Freud's use of relationship in therapy.

The centrality Freud accorded verbal communication in uncovering hysteria's origins, on the one hand, and his rhetorical craft in presenting the cases, on the other, are intertwined but are not identical; after the *Studies*, each underwent further development. By the time of Freud's analysis of Dora in the autumn of 1900, he had developed his theory of

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 93–94n.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 178. See also *ibid.*, 275–76, 280.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>96</sup> Freud comments wryly: "If anyone feels astonished at this associative connection between physical pain and psychical affect, on the ground of its being of such a multiple and artificial character, I should reply that this feeling is as little justified as astonishment at the fact that it is the rich people who own the most money" (*ibid.*, 175).

dreams, had carried out an in-depth self-analysis, and was eager to prove the general importance of the Oedipal conflict he had discovered in himself. Freud's directive and in many ways clumsy application of these ideas to the situation of Dora, indeed his inability to listen and understand what she was telling him, has received extensive commentary from both psychoanalysts and literary critics.<sup>97</sup> Some writers have gone further to insist that Freud not only stopped listening but deliberately falsified what his women patients told him, by reinterpreting their accounts of sexual trauma as fantasies.<sup>98</sup> Proponents of this view ignore repeated statements by Freud throughout his career as to the central importance of sexual trauma in some (though not all) cases of psychopathology.<sup>99</sup> It is inarguable, however, that beginning with his conduct of the Dora case, Freud retrenched from his earlier reliance on his women patients for credible accounts and a share in the building of his method.

On the level of case presentation, Freud's impressive rhetorical mastery has also received a great deal of recent critical scrutiny, especially with reference to the Dora case.<sup>100</sup> Spence has written about the "Sherlock Holmes" tradition in psychoanalytic writing, which he dates from the case of Dora. The most problematic feature of this detective genre is the assumption that every case (detective or psychotherapeutic) has one possible solution or interpretation. Spence views this tradition as Freud's unfortunate legacy to psychoanalysts, whose clinical reports tend to present case material geared to confirming or disconfirming existing theory, rather than revealing the actual interchanges and inferences that take place in therapeutic sessions.<sup>101</sup>

It is in light of these later developments that the *Studies* emerge as an important, and hitherto relatively neglected, early document. The *Studies*

<sup>97</sup> The case of Dora is presented in Freud's "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905 [1901]), *ibid.*, 7:3–122. For commentary on the case by psychoanalysts, see M. Kanzer and J. Glenn, eds., *Freud and His Patients* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1980), esp. the articles by M. A. Scharfman, R. J. Langs, and I. Bernstein. Literary critical perspectives (and two psychoanalytic articles) are provided in Bernheimer and Kahane, eds. (n. 3 above).

<sup>98</sup> See, e.g., J. M. Masson, *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1984); and J. L. Herman, with L. Hirschmann, *Father-Daughter Incest* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>99</sup> For examples of such statements, see C. Hanly, "Review of *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* by Jeffrey M. Masson," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 67, pt. 4 (1986): 517–19. For a more general discussion of the issue from a psychoanalyst's perspective, see L. Shengold, *Soul Murder: The Effects of Childhood Abuse and Deprivation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 32–40.

<sup>100</sup> See S. Marcus, "Freud and Dora: Story, History, Case History"; and N. Hertz, "Dora's Secrets, Freud's Techniques," both in Bernheimer and Kahane, eds.

<sup>101</sup> D. P. Spence, *The Freudian Metaphor: Toward Paradigm Change in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1987), 113–59.



capture a moment when Freud's therapeutic techniques were explicitly provisional and his rhetorical emphasis explicitly oriented to the process of the clinical encounter. Freud's illuminating discoveries concerning the curative process are made in the context of his consideration of alternative approaches, his attention to details, and his careful recounting of these details. He attempts both to discern clinical realities and to lay bare the processes by which he arrives at them. Freud was, like Charcot, an ambitious man of science; but in the *Studies*, his desire to discover scientific truths compelled him to humble himself before what he heard and to identify his patients' utterances as a primary source of clinical knowledge.

### Conclusion

I have charted the different methods used by Charcot and Freud to investigate hysteria, and I have characterized these as depending primarily on processes of looking or listening. The questions that prompted my investigation concerned the Salpêtrière's interest in photography and neglect of subjective patient accounts. These concerns can be captured in a more general question: Why was the subjective information of patients substantially ignored by Charcot, while for Freud it was central in building his theory of hysteria?

In providing an answer, I have tried to demonstrate that underlying Charcot's use of visual observation was a conception of empirical neurological science and a tradition of the clinicoanatomic method. Gifted as a visual artist, Charcot brought his natural abilities to the task of observing and understanding neurological disease. When photography became available, it was regarded by Charcot and others as providing, quite literally, a truly objective record of reality. It was the retina of the scientist, with the supreme advantage of being able not only to see but also to record visual information.

One might infer from the enthusiasm with which Charcot greeted photography that its value resided, at least in part, in the improvement it represented over drawing and painting. However, it is clear that Charcot did not distinguish between painting and photography insofar as their ability to create truthful records of the disorder was concerned. Rather, he treated painters, photographers, and scientists as similarly accurate observers of nature. It was perhaps not much of a leap, then, for Charcot to incorporate his own documentation of hysteria into artistic tradition through pose, paint, and picture books that linked depictions of hysteria across the ages. Because art, photography, and clinical viewing all were seen by Charcot and his colleagues as objective, the craft—and distortion—necessary to align his representations of hysterics with artistic tradition went unnoticed.

The underside of Charcot's fascination with the visual was his inattention to the subjective information conveyed by patients' words. What amazes me about the *Iconographie* is the wealth of verbal information it presents and

the poverty of interpretation. This poverty can be understood on many levels. On the level of etiological explanation, the Salpêtrière doctors were limited by the global and relatively ill-defined model of heredity by which they understood hysteria and on which Charcot insisted throughout his career. Charcot's view of heredity operated through a deterministic logic by which anything that happened in the family, or that involved the reproductive functions, by virtue of its association with the course of hereditary transmission, was seen to be caused by it. In this light we can understand better how it was that any and all experiences involving menstruation, breastfeeding, pregnancy, childbirth, or sexual intercourse were collapsed together as the product of heredity and were regarded as unmediated by the meaning they might have for those who experienced them. Ironically, in their zeal to create a truly objective picture of hysteria, the Salpêtrière doctors were unable to see the ways in which the women patients' own subjective desires affected the picture they were constructing.

On the sociological level, one obstacle to Charcot's listening to his patients was that they seemed so different: they were women, they were poor, and they were sick. In a period when class, gender, and mental illness were considered more rigid categories than they are today, the disparities between the scientist and his subject gaped very large. To listen to (poor, sick) women's accounts, to see them as something other than "babbling," and to use these as scientific evidence was to throw into confusion accepted notions of knowledge and power. Had Charcot consciously and explicitly admitted these women's words as evidence (instead of recording and then ignoring them), he would also have had to admit that they could be tellers of truth and possessors of knowledge. He would have had to shift his notion of himself as a scientist from someone who talks only about, to someone who talks to, his subjects. With this shift Charcot's claim to the position of neutral observer would have been put into question. The fact that Freud did listen to his patients' accounts may rest in part on the fact that he saw a different group of patients, patients who were not warehoused en masse in an asylum but were able to visit his consulting room and to pay his fees.

On a psychological level, just as the psychoanalyst looks to areas of confusion or contradiction to locate intrapsychic conflict in his patient, one might detect in Charcot's own confused encounter with hysteria the evidence of some kind of internal conflict as well. The core question is why Charcot, who at least to some extent acknowledged the psychological component of hysteria, did not investigate it in his patients despite glaring evidence, carefully collected by the Salpêtrière chroniclers themselves. Successful as it was with strictly neurological diseases, his method rendered consideration of subjective evidence impossible and the subjective patient accounts themselves unintelligible. Parallel to Charcot's inability to take account of the subjectivity of the Salpêtrière patients was his inability to take account of the role his own subjectivity played. Charcot's and his

colleagues' firm belief in their own objectivity itself constituted a threat to that very objectivity: first, by making them unable to question their own role in constructing the picture of the disease; and second, through their inability to see their own participation in recreating the pathogenic conditions of their patients' lives—neglect, lack of empathy, and exploitation. They were likewise unable to see how the attention that they gave to the patients who served as photographic subjects contributed to the patients' display of florid symptoms. What Charcot's practice does not address explicitly is the ever-present mutual effect of the doctors on the patients and the patients on the doctors.

By drawing attention to Charcot's problematic use of visual observation, I am not making a claim for the epistemological superiority of listening, nor do I claim with some feminist writers that looking is more closely aligned with masculine understanding, and listening with feminine, however these might be defined.<sup>102</sup> In my view, Charcot's inability to account for his own subjective contribution did not arise from his visual method *per se* but, rather, resulted from his opinion that visual observation yielded an unproblematic apprehension of truth. In tracing the uses of the metaphor of vision in our conceptions of knowledge, E. F. Keller and C. R. Grontkowski have pointed out that visual observation can be used both to communicate and to objectify.<sup>103</sup> In Western philosophical tradition, they argue, the objectifying function of vision gained ascendancy at the expense of its communicative function. The Salpêtrière photographers privileged vision's objectifying function, with the effects noted by Keller and Grontkowski: the radical division of subject and object and the submersion of the communicative, connective functions of vision in the service of objectification. The Salpêtrière's use of photography can be seen as part of its overall tendency to disavow the observer's perspective in the process of fashioning reality.

The stance adopted by the Salpêtrière doctors was founded on—and foundered upon—an inability to see their position as interpretive. In a psychoanalytic sense, the ultimate effect of disavowing personal perspectives and aims inherent in one's enterprise is to create the conditions for their

<sup>102</sup> The notion that seeing and sight are linked to masculinity, while listening and voice are particularly female-identified activities, has been articulated by French feminists such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray (see E. Marks and I. de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms* [New York: Schocken, 1980]), and developed in other forms by American psychologists and critics (e.g., M. Belenky, B. Clinchy, N. Goldberger, and J. Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing* [New York: Basic, 1986]). For an interesting slant on the issue, see C. Gilligan, L. M. Brown, and A. Rogers, "Psyche Embedded," in *Studying Persons and Lives*, ed. A. L. Rabin et al. (New York: Springer, 1990). Camille Paglia reverses the valorization of "feminine" words over "masculine" vision in her provocative *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990).

<sup>103</sup> E. F. Keller and C. R. Grontkowski, "The Mind's Eye," in Harding and Hintikka, eds. (n. 4 above), 245–81.

reappearance in unconscious forms. At the Salpêtrière, sexuality was said to be unrelated to hysteria, yet it was used in hysteria's pictorial representation. Photographs were said to provide a completely objective picture of reality, yet their subject was contrived and surfaces "touched up." Charcot's scientific inquiry into hysteria was intended to incorporate the highest forms of art, yet the result was a hybrid representation that conveyed fully neither an artist's vision nor a scientist's precision.

Freud's approach to hysteria, characterized primarily by verbal communication, had both an interpretive and a relational dimension. His awareness of his own role was inseparable from his acknowledgment of his patients' perspective. The science that Freud constructed involved the study of an individual's subjective world, with the relationship of analyst and patient as the central activity of exploration. As an objective study of the subjective self, it did not insist that knowledge is acquired only at the price of impersonality, distance, or rigid division of self and object; it held instead that reliable and authentic knowledge could be gained from the involvement of two people in a relationship.

Charcot's and Freud's models of inquiry can be fruitfully conceptualized as differing along the lines of the concepts of "static" and "dynamic" objectivity developed in recent years by Evelyn Fox Keller in her work on the philosophy of science. Keller defines the "static objectivity" that characterizes traditional scientific method as "the pursuit of knowledge that begins with the severance of subject from object." "Dynamic objectivity," by contrast, is "a pursuit of knowledge that makes use of subjective experience," in which "the struggle to disentangle self from other is itself a source of insight."<sup>104</sup> That subjectivity and science are connected is undeniable, according to Keller, but we operate within an ideology that obscures that connection. Ideological pressures can be revealed, Keller suggests, by examining the irrational or inconsistent elements that pervade any given scientific enterprise.

Keller has illustrated, through historical example and psychological analysis, how extrascientific forces influence the development of scientific method and knowledge. She points out that "our 'laws of nature' are more than simple expressions of the results of objective inquiry or of political and social pressures: they must also be read for their personal—and by tradition, masculine—content. [Recent sociology of science] uncovers . . . the personal investment scientists make in impersonality; the anonymity of the picture they produce is revealed as itself a kind of signature."<sup>105</sup> Psychoanalysis is, in Keller's terms, "a form of knowledge

<sup>104</sup> Keller (n. 4 above), 117.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 10. The investment in impersonality derives, in Keller's view, from the culturally and historically pervasive link between objectivity and masculinity, and the origin of this link in problems of psychological gender development.

of other persons that draws explicitly on the commonality of feelings and experience in order to enrich one's understanding of another in his or her own right."<sup>106</sup> Ultimately, the concept of transference, present only in rudimentary form in the *Studies*, takes the doctor-patient relationship itself as the central process to be investigated. The centrality of transference in psychoanalysis is an instance of the dynamically objective "disentangling" of which Keller speaks.

In the early case studies, Freud's understanding of his women patients, his understanding of hysteria, and his dynamically objective approach powerfully converge. If feminism, as Keller writes, "seeks to enlarge our understanding of the history, philosophy, and sociology of science through the inclusion not only of women and their actual experiences but also of those domains of human experience that have been relegated to women: namely the personal, the emotional, and the sexual,"<sup>107</sup> then Freud's early work develops something of a "feminist" science. Freud's first gropings toward the theory of psychoanalysis incorporated both women's actual experiences and traditionally feminine domains. Further, Freud studied "women and their actual experiences" and integrated the domains relegated to them—"namely the personal, the emotional, and the sexual"—into his psychological theory.

I want to emphasize how short-lived this early phase of Freud's work was. By 1905 he had rejected his own theory of hysteria's necessary origins in sexual trauma and accorded fantasy a central role in its psychogenesis. He had also developed his conception of the Oedipus complex through his own self-analysis, under whose long shadow the analysis of Dora was carried out. Much recent feminist criticism has drawn attention to the ways Freud imposed his theory upon the subjective reality of Dora and other patients and has drawn a picture of Freud more akin to Charcot than the one I have drawn here.<sup>108</sup> Yet while feminist critiques of Freud have offered a necessary corrective, an exclusive focus on the dominating aspects of Freud's treatment results in too rigid a reading of his early cases. Moreover, it misses the opportunity to see in them a way of approaching the study of subjectivity. These critiques are more fruitfully applied, I think, to Freud's "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905) and to his later writings on femininity.

My purpose has been to examine an earlier period in Freud's work and to describe its contrast to Charcot's work before him. It would be useful now to begin to explore the developmental history of Freud's ideas about the psychology of women. A number of questions suggest

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>108</sup> For example, Bernheimer and Kahane, eds. (n. 3 above).

themselves. Specifically, how did changes in Freud's theoretical agenda make his relationship to Dora so different from his relationship to Elisabeth von R.? More generally, what circumstances fostered his ability to listen to women and what inhibited it? How did the language Freud used to describe women change over time? A number of psychoanalysts and writers have attempted to chart the unfolding of Freud's understanding of female psychology; such efforts bode well both for the study of psychoanalytic history and for feminist rereadings of Freud's work.<sup>109</sup>

The same contrasts I have described between Freud's and Charcot's work, and between Freud's early and later work, on a larger scale characterize the fields of both psychoanalysis and academic psychology. Within psychoanalysis, the question of whether the discipline is an objective science or a system of interpretation—and the question of what these terms themselves mean—reemerges from time to time with great intensity. These issues have proven central to debates on object relations versus drive theory, meta-psychology versus clinical theory, and hermeneutic versus empiricist perspectives and approaches.<sup>110</sup> Until recently, practitioners of psychoanalysis have tended to insist upon the discipline's scientific stature, while remaining relatively ambiguous in their terminology and imprecise in describing their own role in the clinical process; they have tended, in other words, to insist

<sup>109</sup> Carol Gilligan has advanced the view that Freud began to misunderstand women beginning with the case of Dora, and that this had implications for the development of his concept of the Oedipus complex (see "The Conquistador of the Dark Continent: Reflections on the Psychology of Love," *Daedalus* 113, no. 3 [1984]: 75–97, and "Oedipus and Psyche: Two Stories about Love" [paper presented at the Conference on Complex Femininity: Changing Views of Women in Psychoanalytic Thought, Philadelphia Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology, February 1987]). The latter paper compares Freud's discussion of Elisabeth von R. and Dora. Nancy Chodorow has cataloged the multiplicity of accounts Freud gives of women, including women as patients, analysts, and figures in the male psyche, in her article "Freud on Women," in *Cambridge Companion to Freud*, ed. Jerome New (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). A fascinating exploration of the relation of Freud's own psychology to the use of words and his approach to women is found in an interview with French analyst Monique Schneider in E. H. Baruch and L. J. Serrano, *Women Analyze Women: In France, England, and the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 1988). Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, in *Anna Freud: A Biography* (New York: Summit, 1988), points to the central role that Freud's analysis of his daughter Anna played in his later work on femininity.

<sup>110</sup> P. Buckley, ed., *Essential Papers on Object Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 1986); N. J. Chodorow, "Relational Individualism: The Mediation of Self through Psychoanalysis," in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individualism, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. T. Heller, M. Sosna, and D. Wellbery (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986); R. Schafer, *A New Language for Psychoanalysis* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976); M. Gull, "The Point of View of Psychoanalysis: Energy Discharge or Person?" *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought* 6, no. 4 (1983): 523–51; R. Wallerstein, "Psychoanalysis, Psychoanalytic Science, and Psychoanalytic Research—1986," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 36, no. 1 (1988): 3–30.

on the discipline's "statically objective" legitimacy at the expense of its "dynamically objective" promise.<sup>111</sup>

In academic psychology there has been a historical tendency to minimize or refrain from investigating the effects of researchers on the researched. Research psychologists traditionally have viewed themselves as investigators of brute facts and have conceptualized methodological rigor as inhering in the removal of their own effects, as if such a thing were possible. More recently, it has become clearer that all research on fellow humans involves both interpretation and relationship, however implicit. Thus, a more accurate view would accept the researcher's influence as inevitable and demand honesty about its effects. Such honesty involves more than simply giving a short paragraph about the limitations of a study; it demands a richer inquiry into and description of one's effects. A persuasive demonstration of how one came to a given view must not obscure one's own emotional impetus; rather it should explore both the insights and distortions that that impetus has fueled. The possibility of grappling with questions of interpretation has been constricted by the empiricist values of the field, and psychology has lagged behind other social sciences in developing self-consciousness about its own enterprise.<sup>112</sup> Psychologists have seldom reflected critically on the philosophical and historical origins of their own practices. Too often, their conventional methods of inquiry have actually militated against historical reflection, because it seems to threaten the timelessness and universality of their findings.

Fortunately, these issues are slowly moving to the forefront of debate within psychology and psychoanalysis,<sup>113</sup> and both fields have begun to explore more fully what it means to be a science and what it means to be objective. Objectivity, as Keller defines it, is "the pursuit of a maximally authentic, and hence, maximally reliable, understanding of the world around oneself."<sup>114</sup> Charcot and Freud grappled with the problem of

<sup>111</sup> Spence (n. 101 above) offers a fuller description of this problem in *The Freudian Metaphor*, esp. 71–159.

<sup>112</sup> For a refreshing counterexample, see J. Haaken, "Field Dependence Research: A Historical Analysis of a Psychological Construct," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 13, no. 2 (Winter 1988): 311–30.

<sup>113</sup> Examples in the psychological literature include M. J. Packer, "Hermeneutic Inquiry in the Study of Human Conduct," *American Psychologist* 40, no. 10 (October 1985): 1081–93, esp. 1087; E. E. Jones and A. Thorne, "The Rediscovery of the Subject: Intercultural Approaches to Clinical Assessment," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 55, no. 4 (August 1987): 488–95; L. Brown, M. Tappan, C. Gilligan, B. Miller, and D. Argyris, "Reading for Self and Moral Voice: A Method of Interpreting Narratives of Real-Life Moral Conflict and Choice," in *Entering the Circle: Hermeneutic Investigations in Psychology*, ed. M. J. Packer and R. Addison (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989). The articles cited in n. 110 above provide examples of a similar trend in psychoanalytic writings.

<sup>114</sup> Keller (n. 4 above), 116.

understanding hysteria objectively, and came up with different solutions. To the extent that we can be flexible in our development of methods appropriate to what we study, and aware of the unwitting extrascientific considerations that color our theories and approaches, we will have done what we can to learn from their examples.

*Department of Psychology  
University of California, Berkeley*



## Introduction to Forum

**T**HERE IS A HISTORY behind the presentation of this, the first in a series of discussions that we are inaugurating with the new feature called "Forum." As we said in our Spring 1991 editorial, we want Forum to serve as a vehicle for the discussion of issues, both academic and political, that are of interest to feminist scholars and on which opinions are likely to differ, and to provide a stimulus for thinking about public and policy issues as they affect women. We also said that we were eager to reconnect with the activist concerns of the women's movement that supplied the energy to create the field of feminist studies. And yet this very first Forum presents reports from three countries that until recently were members of the Soviet Bloc, where, for the most part, a second wave of feminist activism has been missing. That is, these pieces represent perspectives that are more broadly based than the sort of debate on a specific public policy issue that we originally envisioned for Forum.

Long before we knew where *Signs* would find its next academic home—even before the momentous events in Eastern Europe during 1989—we as potential editors felt that *Signs* must increasingly concern itself with the international community and that Eastern Europe in particular needed more representation in the journal. To that end, we envisioned a special issue, or at least a cluster of articles. But once *Signs* at Minnesota became a reality, the idea of beginning Forum with a series of discussions of women and feminism in Eastern Europe seemed both timely and appropriate.

What we did not fully realize was that we had lessons in store on two levels, the purely practical and the more profound. The former is no doubt experienced by every American journal that works with authors located outside the country. Technical problems of communication are common, especially with Eastern Europeans, given the almost chaotic conditions under which they are living these days. There are difficulties in understanding: for authors, who are transmitting and presenting ideas in a language other than their own; and for editors, who must deal with the corresponding confusions that arise in attempting to interpret and understand. The process of bringing this section to publication has been arduous and often frustrating, but we have all learned from one another.

On the less concrete level, we experienced what Germans call the *Aha-Erlebnis*, the "aha experience" that comes with the occasional revelations we have in our lives. The aha experience has confronted us with a truism, albeit one we too often ignore: feminisms vary, perceptions of women vary, feminist goals and understandings may well vary greatly from place to place and from time to time. The ever-present dangers of ethnocentricity have once more become apparent, and we have again been made aware of the overriding importance of historical, ideological, and national contexts. Although we are well schooled in the consciousness of differences, we find it useful to be reminded of the variety in women's experiences and in their corresponding reactions and responses.

The resolution of the unique historical and structural contradictions that exist at the moment in Poland, the former East Germany, and Hungary and the policies that result will have vital implications for understanding the role, status, and opportunities of Eastern European women during the next decades. Important opportunities will arise for those who study women and gender. In the past, scholarly examination of revolutionary changes has for the most part tended to ignore the importance of gender relations and has focused more on economic and political phenomena. It is only with the rise of feminist scholarship that we have begun to demand that industrialization be regarded as a gendered and gendering process. The consequence of this demand has been to introduce exciting and important new ways of thinking, new conceptualizations that insist on locating subjectivity, sexuality, and women's agency (not to mention acknowledging gender oppression, structured inequality, and patriarchal culture) in massive historical changes. At the same time, this work has required difficult historical reconstruction and has often been hampered by the absence of direct evidence and documentation.

In the case of Eastern Europe, we have a unique opportunity to study revolutionary changes in a far more direct and immediate way. We hope that feminist scholars in the United States and elsewhere will take up this challenge, exchange ideas and materials with Eastern European colleagues, encourage their attention to feminist issues, and learn from the diversity of their experiences. As recent feminist scholarship on postcolonialism has amply warned us, however, all of us must be careful not to impose our own voices, our categories, and our concerns onto the different historical experiences of others. Still, we must recognize the need for open dialogue and face the challenge of learning how to talk with others while we continue to study the specificities of our own historical experiences. As feminist scholars, our collective goals, both intellectual and political, will be enriched by common but self-reflexive efforts. Our differences will also be clarified, heightening the possibility of mutual understanding and respect.

## INTRODUCTION TO FORUM

The following pieces represent three countries, three vantage points. Two are by Eastern Europeans, one by the Polish lawyer/legal scholar Malgorzata Fuszara and the other by the Hungarian sociologist Julia Szalai. The third is by Dorothy Rosenberg, an American scholar of German literature who has spent considerable time since the upheaval of 1989 in the former German Democratic Republic and who has assumed the role of intermediary and information transmitter between that country and our own on a number of levels. The three articles may show some overlap and may present bases for comparison, but in most respects each paints a particular picture of a particular country, each with a particular problem or set of problems. All, however, break down any number of illusions Western feminists might harbor about life in the Brave New World of Eastern Europe.

The points Fuszara, Rosenberg, and Szalai raise present both paradoxes and ironies. There is, for example, the paradox of equality: even though Hungarian, East German, and Polish women (and Eastern European women in general) have been not only welcome but essential in the paid work force, the concomitant equality implied by political and economic theories reflecting middle-class white men's experiences has not materialized in any straightforward way. Eastern European women's increasing educational training has brought them neither equal pay nor particularly interesting work. And especially for women with children, paid work, coupled with domestic responsibilities—the burden of the “double day”—has had paradoxical results. In the face of a gendered division of domestic labor that remained unchanged throughout the period of state socialism and chronically (or increasingly) inadequate provision of state services (especially child care), socialist citizenship in Eastern Europe in the post-World War II era has reinforced women's responsibility for the domestic sphere and for the care of children. None of our authors addresses how care of an aging population will enter into the societal distribution of these responsibilities. If the experience of the West provides any basis for prediction, the aging of the population is a phenomenon likely to have important consequences for the burden of work women will bear.

But participation in the paid labor force and the provision of limited resources by the state (even if, as Rosenberg reports, it is viewed by some feminists in the former GDR as a patriarchal state) has expanded women's capacities to take part in the modern sectors of their societies and increased their sense of autonomy. In Hungary, women's participation in the second economy added to these general trends. Szalai's analysis provides us, however, with an interesting example of the contradictions inherent when the state increases women's legal equality while maintaining a traditional gender division of labor and patriarchal ideology. On the

one hand, cooperative relations between women and men in the Hungarian second economy contradict some Western feminists' analysis of gender relations as intrinsically antagonistic. On the other, Hungarian women continue to have fewer resources (material, political, or ideological) than men with which to negotiate more egalitarian gender relations.

Fuszara, Rosenberg, and Szalai also make clear the irony of political liberalization in Eastern Europe. Western feminists would have expected that in each country the state's removal of the many limitations on political participation, its opening up of economic and political alternatives, and its reduced control over cultural diversity would have brought a corresponding liberalization of thought. Yet an emerging conservatism is apparent in the political demand to enact a total ban on abortion in Poland (reflecting in part the resurgence of political power exercised by the church in this devoutly Catholic country), in the reduction of social benefits in East Germany, and in the debates over the role of the church and the presocialist landed gentry in Hungarian public life (reflecting in part the demands of coalition politics which give numerically small political parties an unusual amount of power). As reactionary forces virtually overwhelm the much weaker voices for more progressive alternatives, "political liberalization" in Eastern Europe seems ironically to mean—in North American slang—that Father State is being replaced by Father Knows Best.

Similarly, we would have expected that lifted bans on political activity would have brought a proliferation of political groups to articulate long-silenced interests. While the harrowing public debate on abortion in Poland may at least have stimulated the growth of a more vociferous Polish feminist movement, there are obvious differences between what is understood as feminist or as a women's movement in Poland or in Hungary, and what is feminist in the United States, in Western Europe, or in Australia/New Zealand. We see these differences illustrated often. Great numbers of East German women may reflect a different notion of self-interest when they vote for a political party overtly opposed to abortion and that is also known for its opposition to women in the workplace. Similarly—if more ambiguously—in Hungary, after decades of participation in the work force, women are increasingly opting to take a state grant to stay home with their young children despite the potential harm to occupational and/or career mobility. As Szalai reports, this marks a frighteningly familiar trend toward a feminization of poverty, increasing inequality, and an intergenerational transmission of disadvantage.

When it comes to a clear understanding of gender roles, contradictions and ambiguities are apparent in the descriptions provided of all three countries. But it is also striking that the issues of gender relations and gender inequalities, and of patriarchy and its contestation, are being

openly debated in ways that we have not seen before in Eastern Europe. The difficulty of clarifying the debates about gender must be underestimated—and such clarification is made all the more problematic by the speed of the changes that are taking place. But the voices that are insisting that gender-related clarifications occur and, indeed, that they can provide a basis for political action (whether they are explicitly feminist or not) are, we think, more distinct than in the past.

Each case is unique. The Hungarian experiment with a second private economy has been in effect for more than twenty years and presents its particular and particularly contradictory implications for gender relations. The church in Poland as an oppositional and (actual or rhetorical) progressive political force coupled with a particularly reactionary gender ideology may very well, if successful in legislating away women's access to abortion, have especially oppressive consequences for Polish women. The divergent political and economic dynamics set in motion by the cold war division of Germany into two nations need now to be reconciled, and dissimilar approaches to social entitlements for women need to become a single system of social provision.

Although we see many differences between the United States and these three countries, we also see similarities. The debates on abortion in Poland, for example, resemble at least in their broadest outlines the debates in the United States. Hungary's large and growing population of poor single mothers looks distressingly familiar to American observers. The differentiation in East Germany between what is termed feminist thinking and what is called a general but nonfeminist involvement with women's issues is certainly something with which we in the West are also conversant.

These three articles are not meant to represent the sort of full-scale analysis of women, gender, and Eastern Europe that we can expect at some future time. They emerge instead from the moment, from a time and place in which changes literally occur by the day. Despite their data, their tables, their statistics, they still feel like reports from the barricades, where nothing is yet clarified, where everything is very much in flux—and where the situations described may have changed many times between the time these articles were written and their appearance in *Signs*. They express little optimism, a great deal of concern, and no small degree of anger. We cannot really draw conclusions from them; we can only read and register and wonder what will happen.

Future Forums will probably not be as dramatic (or as tentative) as this one. We nevertheless hope that all the Forums will serve to stimulate thought and to inject a degree of controversy into *Signs*.

*Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres and Barbara Laslett*

---

# Legal Regulation of Abortion in Poland

*Małgorzata Fuszara*

**A**BORTION LAW is a hotly debated topic in Poland. A draft bill was introduced into Parliament in summer 1989 that would have banned abortions totally, imposing severe penalties on both physicians performing the procedure and women undergoing it. After vigorous debate, a modified second draft was submitted in summer 1990.

Some aspects of the Polish debate on abortion are similar to those in other countries. For example, organizations have formed opposing or supporting the new law, and their activities include street demonstrations, letter campaigns, public debates, and petitions. However, several features distinguish Poland's experience with the abortion question.

The fall of Communist governments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has generally been followed by more tolerant, less punitive approaches to social issues. Despite this, with respect to abortion a quite contrary trend is evident. This countertrend can best be understood in terms of this particular moment in Polish history. My report will look at Polish public opinion in the contexts of physicians' responsibility, religious belief, and the actual incidence of abortion, both legal and illegal; it will also summarize parliamentary debate on the subject and social movements that have taken shape in response to the abortion controversy.

## **Physicians' responsibility**

The present Polish abortion law has been in force since 1956. The law leaves the decision whether to abort to the physician, with no restriction as to time of pregnancy. A woman's claim of "bad living conditions" is a valid indication for abortion, as are conventional health risks or pregnancy resulting from a criminal act. (Current legal regulations do not specify what constitutes a "criminal act," although a 1932 code specified

I wish to thank Martha Roth for her valuable editorial assistance.

[*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1991, vol 17, no 1]

© 1991 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. 0097-9740/92/1701-0007\$01.00

rape, incest, or underage sex.) The law does not offer a woman the option of abortion simply upon her request, but recent debate has emphasized that in practice this is what it allows, because of physicians' liberal interpretation of "bad living conditions." Although such a liberal abortion law might seem surprising in a Catholic country, it was passed in the aftermath of pronatalist Stalinist policies of the early 1950s that made abortion politically wrong even if sometimes legal.

Because abortions are available both in state hospitals and in private clinics, it is almost always possible for a Polish woman to obtain an abortion. There is no "conscience clause" in Polish law that would enable a doctor to refuse to perform abortion on ethical or religious grounds, but the church has repeatedly asked physicians not to comply with the law, and abortion is generally regarded by Catholics as a sin. For these reasons, one might expect to find some tolerance for doctors who refuse to perform abortions for reasons of conscience. This seems not to be the case, however. In a poll of a national random sample taken in 1960,<sup>1</sup> more than 70 percent of respondents considered such a refusal to be wrong, improper, even inhumane; only 25 percent of respondents accepted a doctor's refusal. The more education respondents had, the more likely they were to condemn such principled refusal by a physician, and similar findings were obtained in the 1980s when the same question was put to a different sample, of unmarried women ages seventeen to thirty.<sup>2</sup>

Whether physicians currently working in public hospitals, who are by definition state employees, have the right to refuse to perform abortions has been a much-disputed issue, and public opinion is split on the question. In some state hospitals, so many staff members claim their right not to perform abortions that none are done. When in summer 1990 a woman deputy announced this fact in the Sejm, the lower house of Parliament, it was greeted with applause; the applause might be interpreted both as support for physicians' right to choose and also as hope for the eventual prohibition of abortion. Those who applauded, however, probably did not take into account the class bias in this exercise of physicians' moral and religious rights. Well-to-do women will always be able to afford private abortions, while poor women who depend on state hospitals will be unable to obtain the procedure regardless of their needs.

<sup>1</sup>J. Kurczewski, "Oceny i postulaty pod adresem lekarzy" (Opinions and postulates in relation to doctors), in *Zawód lekarza w opinii publicznej* (Medical profession in public opinion), ed. J. Kurczewski and J. Solarz (Warsaw: OBOP i SP, 1971).

<sup>2</sup>W. Hordyniec and T. Grabowska, "Społeczna recepcja zjawiska przerywania ciąży i jej wpływ na system wartości u kobiet poddających się zabiegowi" (Perception of abortion in society and its impact on the system of values of women who terminate a pregnancy) (Master's thesis, Library of the Institute of Social Prevention and Resocialization, Warsaw University, Warsaw, 1982).

### Number of abortions

The most important questions in the current debate have to do with how many Polish women obtain abortions, why they want them, and how closely the Polish people actually wish to regulate the procedure. Absolute numbers are difficult to determine because private medical practice is unregulated; thus, only abortions performed in state hospitals can be counted. In the 1980s, between 130,000 and 140,000 abortions were performed annually, for an average of 13.2 abortions per thousand women ages fifteen to forty-nine, or 18.2 per 100 live births.<sup>3</sup> Unrecorded abortions are variously estimated at 55,000–85,000 per annum.<sup>4</sup> Some claim that the total number of abortions performed annually in Poland approaches 300,000,<sup>5</sup> while the Catholic church's official figure is at least twice that, 600,000, and may be as high as one million.<sup>6</sup> These figures have remained stable since 1970.

It is not possible to state unequivocally that the 1956 law resulted in an increase in the number of abortions performed. The rapid rise in abortion figures immediately after the law was passed may simply have reflected an increase in reporting. It is possible to say, however, that the law achieved its main purpose as stated in its preamble: to protect women's lives and health from the risk of illegal abortions. After 1956, the number of deaths caused by abortion declined from 255 cases per year to twelve.<sup>7</sup>

Women's most frequently stated reason for seeking abortion is financial and housing difficulty, according to a small ( $N = 200$ ) study published in 1980.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that in Poland "bad living conditions" may mean a family living in one room or sharing a flat with in-laws, often without realistic hope of better housing.

The same study reported on three hundred women obtaining illegal abortions. Their most commonly stated reasons for having the illicit procedure were ignorance of the possibility of a legal operation, pressure

<sup>3</sup>E. Zielńska, "Oceny prawnokarne przerywania ciąży: Studium porównawcze" (Penal law on abortion: A comparative study) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1986).

<sup>4</sup>S. Klonowicz, "Legalizacja sztucznych poronień a dynamika rozrodczości w Polsce" (Legalization of abortion and the trends of reproduction in Poland), *Studia demograficzne*, vol. 36 (1974).

<sup>5</sup>Pamphlets published by opponents of the draft law and distributed in 1989.

<sup>6</sup>PAX Catholic Association, *Prymas Polski w obronie życia* (The primate of Poland in defense of life) (Warsaw: PAX, 1982).

<sup>7</sup>*Raport Komisji Sejmowej w sprawie aborcji* (Report of the Sejm Commission on abortion) Biuletyn nr 243/VI kad. Kancelaria Sejmu (Warsaw, 1973).

<sup>8</sup>L. Bogunia, *Przerywanie ciąży: Problemy prawnokarne i kryminologiczne* (Abortion: Penal and criminological problems) (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Ossolińskich, 1980).



from another person (most often the lover responsible for the pregnancy), and fear of consulting a doctor. Some women chose an illegal abortion after a physician refused to perform a legal one; reasons given for this refusal included advanced pregnancy, the woman's ill health, and the short interval since a previous abortion. This study certainly supports the claim of pro-abortion activists that women who cannot obtain legal abortions will resort to illegal procedures, regardless of the danger to their health.<sup>9</sup>

The attitude of most Poles toward legal regulation of abortion appears to depend on women's stated reasons for seeking them. Simply wishing not to have a child was regarded as an insufficient reason for abortion by 54 percent of respondents in a 1988 study of a national random sample; it was judged sufficient by 37 percent. Most respondents, 70 percent, said this would be a wrong choice, while 23 percent believed it was correct. In this sample, 75 percent of respondents were aware that the law does not prohibit abortion in such cases, and 90 percent stated they believe abortion is a sin.<sup>10</sup>

When a woman's reasons for aborting a pregnancy include poverty, threat to health, mental illness, large number of living children, or AIDS, however, the number of opponents fell dramatically. In the case of a woman with AIDS, only 16 percent of those surveyed believed she should not be entitled to abortion; 59 percent found this a sufficient reason. Although only a small minority (0.6 percent) of women in the sample approved of abortion morally, a much larger group (37 percent) said they would choose to abort rather than bear an unwanted child.<sup>11</sup>

Studies made in the 1970s on different samples showed that those totally opposed to abortion never exceeded one-third of those surveyed. Even respondents who describe themselves as opponents of abortion rarely believe in unconditional prohibition. Most proponents of a comprehensive abortion ban are women living in rural areas, people with few years of schooling, and old people.<sup>12</sup>

Unconditional opposition to abortion is clearly not the position of most Poles. The new draft bill does not recognize this, nor does it take into account that even opponents of legal abortion rarely favor a total ban. Sponsors of the bill seem to understand that theirs is a minority position, because they have fought proposals to submit it to a referendum, claiming that moral beliefs cannot be determined by electoral means.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>J. Kurczewski, "Carnal Sins and Privatisation of the Body," in *Family, Gender and Body in Law and Society Today*, ed. J. Kurczewski and A. A. Czynczyk, (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 1990).

<sup>11</sup>Zielińska.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

Whether moral beliefs should be decided by law and voted on in Parliament is an unanswered question.

### **Catholicism in Poland**

The opposition of the Catholic church to abortion is important to understand, in view of the fact that more than 90 percent of Poles described themselves as believers and that almost all children and young people receive religious instruction. The 1974 "Declaration on Abortion," approved for publication by Pope Paul VI, derives from natural law the proposition that an individual's right to life cannot be suspended by society or civil authority.<sup>13</sup> Although some interests may be more compelling than life, according to the declaration, life is the condition and basis for all remaining values. Right to life does not depend on time already lived.

The declaration defines some grounds for abortion as "not always wicked," such as danger to a woman's life or health, possibility of birth abnormality, and loss of honor or disgrace. However, none of these grounds gives one person "an objective right to decide about another person's life," even unborn. Catholics can neither do this nor advocate it.

So how can people be polarized around the abortion question in this country, where more than 90 percent describe themselves as believing Catholics? What does this self-definition imply? In the 1988 study of a national random sample, respondents were questioned about belief in God, afterlife, heaven, hell, the Last Judgment, Satan, and sin, and also about their attitudes toward religion.<sup>14</sup> Only 3 percent said they were agnostics, and only 1 percent were "undecided"; 96 percent of respondents described themselves as believers, though 8 percent of these said they were religious but never went to church.

On other questions of belief, 93 percent said they believe in God, 86 percent in sin, 76 percent in the Last Judgment, 71 percent in heaven, 68 percent in an afterlife, 63 percent in Satan, and 62 percent in hell. However, 44 percent said they believe that one is not obligated to follow church dictates at all if one finds them wrong, and 13 percent said such dictates should ostensibly be observed, but really circumvented. Thus, on the question of following church dictates that one thinks are wrong, 57 percent answered that they are not obligated. Fewer than one-third said positively that they believe in following dictates they think are wrong.

<sup>13</sup>Holy Congregation on the Faith, *Declaration on Abortion* (Vatican City: Holy Congregation on the Faith, 1974); Polish edition published in 1981 by Kuria Metropolitalna Warszawska.

<sup>14</sup>Kurczewski, "Carnal Sins and Privatisation of the Body."

Obviously, Polish Catholicism is more complex than it appears. This divergence between church doctrine and believers' views shows why a majority of believing Catholics still accept divorce and legal abortion under certain circumstances, despite the strong opposition of the church. It does not mean, however, that women who have abortions generally approve of them or believe they are not sinning.

Sometimes these contradictions are explained at the individual level, and a woman's decision to terminate a pregnancy is treated as autonomous and free. In practice, according to women's statements, the choice is seldom free. Pressure comes from two conflicting sets of expectations. The first is the Catholic value system, which not only bans abortion but also prohibits contraception and demands sexual temperance and fulfillment of "the woman's mission," that is, maternity. The second consists of the sexual values and needs of women and their partners, which may be ignored or treated superficially by the church. Men, even if they do not demand that women abort, may abandon responsibility and treat the pregnancy and the decision about abortion as the woman's problem only. In such situations, women submit to the pressures of life and not of faith. However, this may cause women to feel frustrated and guilty.<sup>15</sup>

### History of criticism

It is from church circles that the most vociferous criticism of the 1956 abortion law has come. In 1958, the PAX Catholic Association appealed to the Sejm to repeal the law and appealed also to physicians and ancillary medical staff to sabotage its administration. In 1980–81, groups of activist Catholic laypeople with such names as *Gaudium Vitae*, *Pro Familia*, and *Care for Life* mounted another campaign to have the law repealed. These groups declared their concern for the unborn and also for pregnant women, and they attempted to provide services such as telephone counseling and homes for unmarried mothers for women who were undecided whether to abort. In 1989, the Experts' Team of the Episcopate's Commission for Family Matters endorsed the first draft of the bill prohibiting abortion.

Criticism of the abortion law has erupted during periods of relative political freedom in Poland, that is, in 1956–58, 1980–81, and from 1989 to the time of this writing (late 1990). This is the reason for the apparent paradox noted above, that a time of potential liberalization should give rise to new prohibitions and penalties. Religion in Poland has always provided a basis for strong opposition to the law of 1956, but in earlier periods opponents were not free either to express their convictions or to

<sup>15</sup>M. Sokolowska, "Stanowiska kobiet wobec ustawy legalizującej przerywanie ciąży" (Women's attitude toward the act legalizing abortion) (Master's thesis, Library of the Institute of Social Prevention and Resocialization, Warsaw University, Warsaw, 1983).

put the question to public debate. Now that there is greater freedom of discourse, opponents have seized the opportunity.

Twice since 1956 the Ministry of Health has introduced changes in the legal administration of the abortion law, both times in response to pressure from opponents of abortion. In 1981 and again in 1990, doctors performing the procedure were given instructions that had the effect of limiting women's access to it: first, they were required to provide more detailed justification of "bad living conditions" when that is the woman's stated reason for seeking an abortion, and second, they were required to inform women about the possible health risks of abortion and also about social support and assistance available to women who bear children. Pregnancy of more than twelve weeks' duration is regarded as a contraindication to abortion. Physicians are required to ask two or three other physicians to agree that there are not other medical contraindications. And the woman seeking an abortion because of a "bad living standard" must discuss her circumstances and motives with a state-approved psychologist. No one knows the extent to which these regulations are actually applied in private practice. Despite these instructions for changing the administration of the law, the 1956 abortion law itself has remained unchanged.

The new instructions from the Ministry of Health can be variably interpreted. They can be seen as obstacles to abortion and thus as gains for opponents of the procedure, but they can also be seen as a technique for deflecting threats to the 1956 law. Because they address those aspects of the law that were most widely criticized, the Ministry of Health instructions could be seen as undercutting the arguments of opponents.

The modifications did not satisfy critics of the law whose principled opposition is to abortion in itself. The most vocal critics refused any compromise on a total ban. They also claimed that the Ministry of Health instructions lack statutory force and that in any case they apply only to personnel in state hospitals and do not affect the private sector. Since most abortions are performed in private practice, they say, the instructions are ineffectual.

This is the background to the new draft law. A first version, called "On the Protection of the Unborn Child" and consisting of a total unconditional ban on abortion, was sponsored by seventy-four members of the Sejm, including eight women. The first draft of this bill made abortion a crime, with no exceptions. Both the woman undergoing an abortion and the person performing it would have been liable for prosecution and imprisonment for up to three years. Causing damage to the body or impairing the health of the conceived child, or "violating the child's genetic endowment," entailed somewhat lighter penalties.

Framers of the bill assume not only that life begins with conception but that legal personhood begins at that point, with full civil rights and

protections. Parental authority and responsibility also begin with conception. The background material accompanying the bill emphasized that the individual possesses legal autonomy at conception, especially in relation to its mother. The "abuse of the unborn" section of the draft bill explicitly includes in vitro fertilization. The proposed bill also supports multifaceted assistance to mothers and children, although it does not include budget proposals for translating expressions of support into real social policy. Critics of the bill find such assistance unrealistic, given Poland's present economic condition.

### **Parliamentary politics**

The first draft of the bill prohibiting abortion was submitted to the Sejm before the elections of June 1989, which were the first at least partially free elections in Poland's recent history. (The upper house was reestablished in 1989, and its members were elected in a fully democratic manner, whereas only one-third of the seats in the lower house were opened to the public contest by the Round Table agreements.) Street demonstrations, protests, petition campaigns, and vigorous debates about abortion erupted immediately, and candidates for both the lower house and the senate were questioned on the issue. Parliamentary debate was postponed until after the elections, because this highly controversial issue was seen as deflecting attention from the main purpose of the elections, the reestablishment of democracy in Poland. However, popular feeling was so stirred up by the draft bill that debate could not be halted.

In August and September 1990, debate resumed, once again in an atmosphere of protests, pickets, and street demonstrations. The most controversial aspect of the first draft, punishment for women undergoing abortion, was removed, but the unconditional ban remained. In August, 1990, work began in the senate on a new draft bill intended as a compromise. No real compromise seems possible, however, as the two sides of the debate—for and against an unconditional ban on abortion—represent totally opposing views of life, including sexual freedom, sex education, contraception, and many other questions apart from abortion.

### **Summary of parliamentary debate**

Those in favor of the total ban believe in the "sacrosanctity of life." Human life is the ultimate value, and a right to life exists by law of nature. Life is not granted by nor does it follow from recognition by a state or society, and it is a fully protected right at any stage of development. All acts aimed at destroying life—including life in utero and in vitro—are considered crimes.

This position, espoused by proponents of the abortion ban, is close to the centuries-old position of the Catholic church. As expressed in Pope Paul VI's "Declaration on Abortion" as well as the encyclical "Humanae Vitae," the purpose of sexual union is the creation of life. Anything that interferes with this, including all methods of abortion, birth control, or contraception other than church-sanctioned "natural" methods, is proscribed. Unless it is for procreation rather than pleasure, sexual freedom "is by no means human."<sup>16</sup>

Authors and supporters of the Polish bill banning abortion appear to share this vision of human life and freedom. Sexual relations are to be restricted to marital partners and conducted solely for purposes of procreation. Procreation is "the supreme mission of woman," even when it entails risks to her health or her life.<sup>17</sup> Only "natural" methods of birth control are to be allowed; these are described by church authorities as vastly superior to artificial means,<sup>18</sup> although no evidence has been brought forward to substantiate the claim. The reliability of contraception is an issue of special concern in Poland, because the church's view is widely propagated during religious instruction and family-life education, and it is the only view available to most young people.

Contraceptive techniques that are thought to produce early-stage abortion are openly condemned. The bill is silent on other means of contraception, although its backers support large families. One of the senators (Senator Obertaniec) stated that Poland could contribute to a united Europe things that are missing there, namely, large and healthy families.<sup>19</sup> "Natural" methods of fertility regulation have two merits, according to the church: first, they entail no human interference in the natural order of things, and second, they encourage instinctual control because of the necessity for periodic sexual abstinence.

Supporters of the new law put forward as self-evident and noncontroversial their assertions that human life begins with conception and that the state's obligation to protect its citizens begins with protection of the rights of the unborn. They made some supplementary tactical motions to vindicate their position that the decision to take away this protection cannot be justified on any grounds. Opponents of the new law were labeled partisans of the "civilization of death."

For their part, opponents of the draft bill stressed their opposition to abortion; however, they claim that banning the procedure and penalizing

<sup>16</sup>Holy Congregation on the Faith.

<sup>17</sup>J. Buxakowski, "Wprowadzenie do dyskusji nad projektem ustawy o prawnej ochronie dziecka poczętego" (Introduction to the discussion of the Draft Act of Legal Protection of the Conceived Child), *Lad*, no. 26 (June 25, 1989).

<sup>18</sup>Holy Congregation on the Faith.

<sup>19</sup>My notes on debate in the Polish Senate, made from television coverage, September 29–30, 1990.

physicians are not effective means of prevention. They accused proponents of the draft of neglecting the needs of mothers and children. A program of aid to families and to single mothers, combined with sex education and wider availability of contraceptives, would accomplish this aim by leading to a decrease and the eventual elimination of unwanted pregnancy and thus abortion.

In Poland, where nearly everything is in short supply today, there is also a shortage of contraceptives. According to some statements made during the recent debates, abortion is practically the only method of contraception that is fully accessible to all Polish women. Opponents of the draft bill maintained that women were already the victims of a situation where deficiencies in education and a shortage of contraceptives made abortion the only possible solution, and the draft bill would punish them further for their suffering.

The draft bill was also criticized for inconsistency. If proponents truly believed in respect for life at every stage of development, then the bill would include exemptions for pregnancies that endanger the life of the mother. The bill does not permit establishment or denial of paternity before the birth of a child; also, penalties for abortion are lighter than the penalty for murder. The absurdity of penalizing women who have abortions with fines or jail sentences was also pointed out, since either of these would work further hardship on families already hard pressed.

Opponents also argued that a comprehensive ban would have undesirable effects, primarily a huge increase in illegal abortions. Since many of these would be performed under unhygienic conditions, they would result in illness and death of the women involved. A social differential in access to abortion, as mentioned above, would also be a negative effect of the ban.

Finally, opponents argued that complex moral issues such as those involved in the decision to abort a pregnancy cannot be legislated but must be solved in the context of the concrete conditions of individual lives. Since the provisions of the draft bill are consonant with the Catholic church's position, opponents charge that the church, having failed to convince people through preaching and religious education, is attempting to impose its rules with the help of law and penal sanctions, visiting Catholic philosophy on the nation irrespective of individual beliefs.

The program recommended by opponents of the abortion ban consists of material improvements for families so that "bad living conditions" would not force women to interrupt their pregnancies, widespread sex education, and wider access to contraceptives. Only the first of these, however, is acceptable to partisans of the new draft law, and the goal of improved living conditions is unrealistic given Poland's present economic straits.

Sex education and greater access to contraceptives are not seen as acceptable methods of preventing abortion by proponents of the new draft bill. The two sides of this controversy are divided by more than just their attitudes toward abortion; different concepts of privacy, individual freedom (especially in sexual behavior), the family, and life-style are involved, which is why compromise appears unlikely even with opponents making some partial concessions like the Ministry of Health's directives limiting abortion. Supporters believe that their second draft bill, which makes room for exceptions in case of threats to the life of the mother and removes penal sanctions for women undergoing abortion, represents substantial concessions. However, such compromises are unlikely to prove satisfactory in this deeply divisive matter.

### **Recent surveys**

For the past thirty years and more, abortion has been legal in Poland. Even before that, it was not totally banned; the Polish Penal Code of 1932 contains several exceptions to a general prohibition. If a total ban were introduced, therefore, it would contradict decades of practice, habits, and ways of thinking about the issue.

In 1989, public opinion was almost equally divided, with 46 percent favoring the new draft law banning abortion and 44 percent opposing it, while 10 percent did not express their opinions. It does not follow, however, that 46 percent favored a total ban, with penalties; the first draft of the bill had not been widely publicized, and many of those responding to the survey did not know how radical its content was. The subsequent debate informed the public more fully, and responses to later surveys reflect this: in October 1990, the more liberal second draft met with less approval, 37 percent responding in favor of the modified ban and 51 percent opposing it.

Again, farmers, old people, and those with less schooling were more likely to support the ban. It is interesting that there was no statistical difference between men and women respondents.<sup>20</sup> At the beginning of November 1990, only 13 percent supported an absolute ban with penalties, while 33 percent believed abortion should be allowed in specific circumstances such as when pregnancy endangers a woman's health or results from a rape. In this same survey, 26 percent gave "bad conditions," including low income and many living children, as justification for abortion, and as many as 23 percent supported abortion virtually on request.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Życie Warszawy* (October 31/November 1, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> J. Kurczewski, "Wiara, religia i polityka" (Faith, religion, and politics), *Życie Warszawy* (January 1991).



### **The women's movement reborn**

Another argument against the draft bill has been advanced hesitantly: that women have the right to make decisions about their own bodies and the contents of their wombs. Some call the abortion ban compulsory childbearing and a violation of civil liberties, and some feminist groups have rallied around this position.

Mobilization of the Polish women's movement seems to me to be the outstanding achievement of the parliamentary campaign to ban abortion. Readers may not know that the Communist regime destroyed the women's movement that had developed in Poland between the wars. Before 1939, about eighty women's organizations of varying character and political orientation flourished in Poland, but after World War II all of them were superseded by the Women's League, imposed by Party leadership and not accepted by women themselves. The Women's League, though ostensibly committed to representing women's interests, always cooperated with the ruling elite.

With the fall of the regime, this single women's organization lost its reason for existence, and women's points of view were wholly unrepresented on the Polish political and social scene. The bill banning abortion enabled women to see their common goals and take common action, accelerating the emergence of a new wave of women's organizations. At first, all organizing was related to the abortion draft bill, and actions included demonstrations, pickets, and petition campaigns. In the fall of 1990, petitions were presented to the Senate by the Movement for Women's Self-Defense, Pro Femina Association, the Movement for the Defense of Women's Rights, the Feminist Society, and the Committee for Defense of Women. These groups held an initial meeting of representatives to discuss women's problems and to create a more stable women's movement.

Now women's organizations have led debates not only on the abortion ban but on many other issues besides, among them work, incomes, social services, health protection, education, and legal regulation. In this way, paradoxically and certainly without the intent of the legislators, the draft bill banning abortion has fertilized the women's movement in Poland. At the end of 1990, Parliament itself conceived and organized the first women's forum, dealing in an institutionalized way with the whole spectrum of concerns vital to Polish women and their children.

*Institute of Applied Social Sciences  
University of Warsaw*

# Shock Therapy: GDR Women in Transition from a Socialist Welfare State to a Social Market Economy

*Dorothy J. Rosenberg*

WOMEN IN THE FORMER German Democratic Republic (GDR) today find themselves in the peculiar position of having gained a significant expansion of their civil rights at the expense of vital economic ones. The social upheaval and democratic reform movement of the fall and winter of 1989 toppled the Socialist Unity Party (SED) government and brought GDR citizens the rights of speech, assembly, association, and freedom of movement common to Western democracies. Unification with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in October 1990, however, canceled an array of economic rights rarely found in Western market economies—guarantees of employment and affordable housing, free medical care and education, paid parental leave and day care, and a variety of other benefits, transfer payments, and subsidized services.

Time, distance, and years of research will be required for a thorough analysis of the interaction of political, economic, social, and cultural factors that led to the sudden collapse of state socialism in the GDR and the annexation of its territory by the FRG. What I can provide here is a brief description of the effects of this abrupt transition on women in the GDR, their attempts to organize an independent feminist political presence, their ultimate failure to preserve either the legal or the economic

This article is part of a larger research project on women in the GDR partially supported by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon foundation, and the Department of State. None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed here. Funding was also provided by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES)-Fulbright. I would like to thank Vivian Abbott of IREX and Muriel Joffe of CIES for their commitment to this project, Irene Dölling and Eva Kaufmann of the Humboldt University in Berlin for their intellectual stimulation and friendship, and Sara Lennox of the University of Massachusetts—Amherst for her critical support.

[*Signs Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1991, vol. 17, no. 1]

© 1991 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. 0097-9740/92/1701-0008\$01.00

rights they had enjoyed under the state socialist system, and a preliminary analysis of that failure.

Economically and politically, the GDR was an exceptional case within Eastern Europe, and in the wave of change and reform now sweeping the region it still stands out as the state with the best standard of living and the worst conditions for political self-determination. Triggered by a mass emigration to West Germany after Hungary opened its border to the west in summer 1989, a democratic reform movement blossomed briefly in the GDR in the euphoric fall that followed. Although it succeeded in toppling the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED), it was quickly pushed aside by more conservative forces demanding reunification with West Germany. The grass-roots opposition groups formed a broad left coalition, Greens/Bündnis 90, but were massively outfinanced by the East German affiliates of the West German parties. After winning only eight seats in the December 1990 elections for the unified German parliament, they have been reduced to a tiny minority voice. The West German Greens, the only established opposition party in the West, failed to pass the 5 percent support hurdle and lost their parliamentary seats along with most of their funding.<sup>1</sup>

Since last summer, both Germanies have realized that unification has costs as well as benefits.<sup>2</sup> A recent survey by a West German polling organization, the Institute for Applied Social Research (INFAS), found that 83 percent of former GDR citizens and 57 percent of former FRG citizens felt that the situation in the five new states was "dramatic." In addition, 62 percent of eastern Germans and 59 percent of western Germans were "mostly" or "very" dissatisfied with developments since unification.<sup>3</sup>

One of the first results of the July 1, 1990, currency reform was a wave of bankruptcies as West German goods flooded the East German market. West German suppliers often demanded control over the product mix carried by retailers, forcing local products off of supermarket shelves—and frequently into the streets outside, as GDR farmers responded to

<sup>1</sup>West Germany's constitution, the Basic Law, requires that a political party receive at least 5 percent of the popular vote to be seated in Parliament. It was agreed to apply the 5 percent limit separately to the electorates in the East and the West for the 1990 election only. Parties seated in Parliament receive significant federal funding in addition to direct expenses for members' housing, transportation, mailing, and other costs.

<sup>2</sup>Estimates of the total cost of the collapse and reconstruction of the GDR economy and infrastructure now range between a low of one and a high of well over two trillion dollars, with German sources citing the lower range and other analysts guessing higher; see "Germans Lower Expectations on East's Economic Recovery," *New York Times* (February 13, 1991), metropolitan ed., A1, D1; and J. David, "Germany: Budget Cuts Take Shape," *Morgan Stanley Global Perspectives* (January 1991), 19–21.

<sup>3</sup>"Survey: Germans Concerned, Critical about Ex-GDR," *The Week in Germany* (April 26, 1991), 6.

contract cancellations. The economic output of the former GDR fell by 50 percent between September 1989 and September 1990 and was expected to fall 65–70 percent by September 1991. Because a collapsing economy fails to produce tax revenues and the Bonn government refused to provide adequate federal funding to the former East Germany, all five new states were bankrupt by February 1991.<sup>4</sup>

Unemployment, previously unknown in the GDR, was reported as 9.5 percent in the former GDR (837,000 people as of April 1991).<sup>5</sup> This modest figure is achieved by not including among the unemployed approximately 500,000 forced into early retirement, 500,000–600,000 suspended civil servants, or the more than 2 million workers on temporary “short-time,” whose protection against being laid off expired June 30, 1991.<sup>6</sup> The Trusteeship charged with privatizing former state enterprises announced in February 1991 that it expected to retain only

<sup>4</sup>“Finanzhilfe für ostdeutsche Länder” (Financial aid for the East German states) *Deutschland Nachrichten* (February 15, 1991), 5. Emergency negotiations between the federal and state governments resulted in supplementary funding, which still appears to be inadequate in the face of the rapidly rising cost of entitlement programs.

<sup>5</sup>“Westwanderung halt an, Arbeitslosigkeit im Osten steigt weiter” (Westward movement continues, unemployment in the east rises higher) *Deutschland Nachrichten* (May 10, 1991), 5; see also “Germans Lower Expectations on East’s Economic Recovery,” *New York Times* (February 13, 1991), metropolitan ed., A1, D1.

<sup>6</sup>“Westwanderung”; and Christine Klenner, “Sollen wir das länger hinnehmen? Arbeitsmarktlage und weitere Aussichten” (Should we put up with this any longer? The labor market situation and future prospects) (March 1, 1991, typescript). Civil servants present a special problem. The West German civil service includes not only the judiciary, public defenders and prosecutors, postal workers, and civil administrators, but university professors, teachers, doctors, and scientific researchers. And the East German system was even broader. Civil servants, or *Beamte*, enjoy guarantees of lifetime employment as well as generous pensions and other benefits. To avoid extending these rights to former East German civil servants, who are considered to be ideologically suspect, the Bonn government has defined all former GDR federal civil servants as public employees (*Angestellte*) who do not share these rights. Over half a million members of these groups were placed on a so-called waiting list at 70 percent of their normal salary until June 30, 1991, after which they were to be fired. This procedure was declared constitutional on April 24, 1991 by the German Constitutional Court, which found the measure to be “necessary to build as quickly as possible a modern, efficient administration working according the rule of law.” See “Warteschleife verfassungsgemäß” (Waiting list constitutional), *Deutschland Nachrichten* (April 26, 1991), 3; “6 Academic Institutions in Eastern Germany Closed by State Officials; Several Departments Dissolved,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 16, 1991), A41, A43; and “Über die Evaluation zum Bankrott?” (Bankruptcy by way of evaluation?) *Neues Deutschland* (January 23, 1991), 9. Bonn is offering West German civil servants a tax-free monthly bonus of up to \$1,500 to replace them; see David Goodhart, “‘Selfish’ Officials Attacked by Employer’s Organisation Chief,” *Financial Times* (May 2, 1991), international ed., 2; western Germans working in the former GDR are routinely paid West German-level salaries, significantly higher than their eastern counterparts. These policies are particularly striking compared with the West German postwar practice of retaining virtually all National Socialist civil servants not convicted of crimes against humanity and recognizing the pension rights of those few who were dismissed; see Ralph Giordano, *Die zweite Schuld, oder Vom der Last Deutscher zu sein* (Hamburg: Rasch & Rohring, 1987).

half of the 3.65 million employees originally placed under its control.<sup>7</sup> The real unemployment rate in the former GDR was over 25 percent by the end of 1990,<sup>8</sup> while average gross monthly income in eastern Germany had reached only 37 percent of the western German level.<sup>9</sup> Unemployment was expected to reach 50 percent by summer 1991.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence, about one thousand persons per day, mostly young skilled workers, continue to leave the GDR to seek work in the west.<sup>11</sup>

The highest price for unification is being paid by GDR women, children, and the elderly as a "socialist welfare state" is transformed into a "social market economy." By the summer of 1991, only slightly over half of the newly unemployed were women;<sup>12</sup> however, women constituted just one-quarter of those who had found new jobs as the labor market shifted and membership in the labor force was redefined by the West German model. Single mothers are disproportionately represented among the unemployed, as are women over fifty and women with college degrees.<sup>13</sup> As child-care centers raise their prices or close for lack of funding, more

<sup>7</sup>*Deutschland Nachrichten* (February 22, 1991), 6.

<sup>8</sup>Approximately 2.5 million unemployed out of a labor force of 8.5 million; see Gunar Winkler, *Sozialreport '90: Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in der DDR* (Berlin: Verlag die Wirtschaft, 1990), 78; and *New York Times* (February 12, 1991), metropolitan ed., A9; and *The Week in Germany* (February 8, 1991), 5.

<sup>9</sup>1,357.37DM; see David Goodhart, "E. German Land Claim Quashed by Court," *Financial Times* (April 24, 1991), international ed., 3.

<sup>10</sup>Some reports based on the February 1991 figures estimate unemployment as 40 percent. All sources expect further decline in employment (*New York Times* [March 1, 1991], metropolitan ed., A6).

<sup>11</sup>Between November 1989 and December 1990, 700,000 Germans moved from the former GDR to the western states. Another 300,000 are expected to leave in 1991. Tens of thousands of eastern Germans cross the former border daily to work in the west at lower wages than their western counterparts. A March 1, 1991, report prepared by the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin predicted the number of "commuters" would rise to 280,000 by the end of the year. Western employers have arranged bus services for their eastern workers; see "Westwanderung"; Klenner; and John Taglibue, "Young Germans Still Flocking from East to West," *New York Times* (March 11, 1991), metropolitan ed., A6.

<sup>12</sup>Statistics for the first quarter of 1991 place female unemployment at 57 percent on average, with higher levels in some regions; see "Die Frauen sind die Variablen des Arbeitsmarktes: ND-Gespräch mit Dr. Marina Beyer, Gleichstellungsbeauftragte der einstigen DDR-Regierung" (Women are a variable factor on the labor market: Interview with Dr. Marina Beyer, Equality Officer of the former GDR government), *Neues Deutschland* (January 30, 1991), 9; and Klenner. Beyer also points out that single mothers are the first targets of lay-offs, constituting a disproportionate 10 percent of the total unemployed. She also says that women over fifty-five "haven't got a chance" and are forced into early retirement far more frequently than men over sixty. The third worst-hit group comprises women with college degrees, especially those in higher education. The Labor Ministry has also been unable to explain why only 33 percent of federally funded positions under the Employment Procurement program (*Arbeitsbeschaffungs-massnahmen*) have gone to women.

<sup>13</sup>"Gespräch mit Dr. Marina Beyer."

and more women are forced out of work or onto welfare.<sup>14</sup> Although a recent INFAS poll showed that only 3 percent of the women in the five new eastern states described housewife as their ideal job and 65 percent stated that "they would work even if they didn't need the income,"<sup>15</sup> the West German social agenda and economic infrastructure are returning them to the private sphere whether they wish to be there or not.

Women who made career choices and personal decisions within a different social and economic universe now find themselves confronted with a set of consequences for which they are unprepared. In fall 1990, Christine Schenck, speaking for the GDR's Independent Women's Union (UFV), characterized the effects of unification as "a massive attack on the rights of women."<sup>16</sup> In the Bundestag's closing debate over the Unification Treaty, Representative Renate Schmidt noted that instead of making urgently necessary improvements in West German social services, unification was making conditions in the GDR equally bad.<sup>17</sup> In fact, as the true costs of unification become visible, social services in both parts of Germany are being degraded.<sup>18</sup>

Although American observers generally consider West Germany to have a progressive social welfare system (true in comparison with the United States), it does not compare favorably with the Scandinavian social democracies in the general level of social services and is even further behind in policy on women and family issues. West Germany is an essentially conservative society, which is especially evident in gender

<sup>14</sup>The Bonn government agreed to continue funding for the extensive network of public day-care centers in the former GDR only until June 1991, and many enterprise-run day-care centers have already closed, leaving parents unsure of where or how to place their children or what it will cost in the future. "Bleak Winds of Change Sweep Kindergartens and Worry Parents in East Germany," *German Tribune*, no. 1464 (April 21, 1991), 12; West Germany does not pay unemployment benefits to women with children who cannot prove that they have day care for their child, as they are not considered available to work; Gisela Helwig, *Frau und Familie: Bundesrepublik Deutschland—DDR* (Berlin: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1987), 46.

<sup>15</sup>One thousand four hundred twenty-three women between the ages of sixteen and sixty in the former GDR were polled in fall 1990; "Merkel: Ex-GDR Women Want to Work, 'Right to Childcare' Law Needed," *The Week in Germany* (March 1, 1991), 2, also see *Pressemitteilung des Bundes—ministeriums für Frauen und Jugend*, nr. 3 (Press announcements—Ministry for Women and Youth) (Bonn: Ministry for Women and Youth, February 15, 1991), 1.

<sup>16</sup>*Die Tageszeitung* (August 31, 1990), Berlin ed., 1, 5.

<sup>17</sup>"Streit um Anschlussvertrag halt bis zur letzten Minute an" (Fight over annexation agreement lasts until the last minute), *Neues Deutschland* (August, 31, 1990), 1.

<sup>18</sup>David (n. 2 above), 19. For example, although 20,000 children in west Berlin are wait-listed for day-care space, the new combined city administration plans to abolish 18,000 day-care spaces in the eastern part of the city; "Grauer Markt: Kommerzielle Agenturen für die Kinderbetreuung bringen den Beruf der Tagesmutter in Verruf" (Gray market: Commercial child care agencies spoil the reputation of day-mothers), *Der Spiegel* 45, no. 16 (April 15, 1991): 76.

issues.<sup>19</sup> Compared with other advanced industrial nations, it has a relatively low level of female employment, a highly gender-segregated labor force, and poor integration of women into the professions. West Germany's tax code strongly favors the "housewife marriage"; its abortion law narrowly restricts access; and its family policy encourages mothers to leave the work force, while its labor market and child-care policies discourage them from returning to it.

Upon unification on October 3, 1990, the West German legal code took effect (with certain exceptions) in GDR territory. The Bonn coalition had announced August 23, 1990, that all superior rights or benefits provided in the GDR would be reduced to FRG levels. The two social insurance systems were not joined, however: based on lower wages in the GDR—but no longer justified by lower costs<sup>20</sup>—a lower level of pension, early retirement, unemployment, and health insurance benefits continue to be paid in the former GDR. In fact, in an unprecedented move, the Bonn government has reduced and capped the pensions of doctors, lawyers, judges, teachers, college professors, and public administrators, along with other public employees in the former GDR.<sup>21</sup> This means that East German professionals, who earned significantly less than their colleagues in the West, are being punished as retirees for having failed to emigrate.<sup>22</sup> Women, who were concentrated in public administration,

<sup>19</sup>Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Hanna Schissler, "Women in the Two Germanys," *German Studies Review*, DAAD special issue (1990), 71–85.

<sup>20</sup>The prices of foodstuffs rose to the West German level immediately after the July 1, 1990, currency union. State subsidies on a number of goods and services ceased on January 1, 1991, and prices rose sharply. Some examples: electricity (+197 percent), gas (+201 percent), public transportation (+43.8 percent), train fares (+78.5 percent), see *Statistisches Bundesamt Bericht*, as reported in *Neues Deutschland* (February 27, 1991), 3. The majority of former GDR citizens live in state-owned rental housing. In January 1991, the Bonn government also announced rent increases (including heating and renovation costs) of between 300 and 400 percent scheduled to take effect in October 1991; "Massiver Anschlag auf Ost-Mieter" (Massive attack of eastern renters), *Neues Deutschland* (January 22, 1991), 2.

<sup>21</sup>East German pensions have now reached 50.8 percent of the West German level. In April 1991, the Bonn coalition announced that it would reduce the pensions of all former GDR public employees to a maximum of 1,500 DM per month (approximately \$1,000) on July 1, 1991. This measure affects 280,000 retired doctors, teachers, artists, actors, musicians, and scientists as well as party functionaries, police, army, and customs officials who belonged to a set of supplementary pension systems that assured them a retirement income of 90 percent of their preretirement salary. Retired state security personnel (*Stasi*) will receive 600 DM (\$400). After the east and west pension systems are joined in 1992, former East German public employees' pensions will not be allowed to rise above the average salary in the territory of the former GDR, with *Stasi* limited to 65 percent of that level; "Soziale Volkspartei" (Social People's Party), *Der Spiegel* 45, no. 16 (April 15, 1991): 34–37.

<sup>22</sup>Until 1990, GDR citizens or "German stock" from other Eastern European countries moving to West Germany were automatically given West German citizenship and a variety of benefits, including pension entitlements based on level and years of employ

education, medicine, and the judiciary, are especially affected.<sup>23</sup> This petty and arbitrary new policy becomes even more offensive when compared to the generosity shown to retired fascist civil servants in postwar West Germany. Virtually all former Nazi party members in public employment received their full pensions.<sup>24</sup>

Negotiations over the unification treaty reached an impasse over abortion, which was available on demand during the first trimester in the GDR. The West German parties, concerned about alienating millions of GDR voters by banning abortion outright before the all-German election on December 2, 1990, agreed to a "transitional period" of at most two years during which abortion would continue to be legal in the GDR. The last few days before the deadline for signing the treaty were dominated by a debate between the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democrats (SPD): not over whether the right to abortion should be preserved, much less expanded, but over whether West German women who had abortions in the GDR during the transitional period should be prosecuted. The CDU/CSU supported the "home address" principle (*Wohnort*) and demanded prosecution of women who seek abortions in other countries ("abortion tourism"),<sup>25</sup> while the SPD insisted that the

---

ment as if they had worked in the FRG. Since unification, former East German retirees are free to move to the west but receive only east-level pensions (50.8 percent). "German stock" from other countries continued to receive west-level pensions regardless of whether they emigrated to eastern or western Germany. The solution to this problem is that after July 1, 1991, "German stock" emigrating to western Germany will receive 80 percent of the west-level pension, those moving to eastern Germany will receive 100 percent of the east-level; "Soziale Volkspartei."

<sup>23</sup>1978 figures for the GDR show that 65.8 percent of teachers, 20 percent of school principals, 8.5 percent of tenured professors, 49 percent of doctors, 52 percent of dentists, 64 percent of pharmacists, and 45.1 percent of judges were women; Helwig (n. 14 above), 49. By 1988, entry-level skill or professional qualifications in the GDR had reached gender balance in age cohorts up to age forty; Winkler (n. 8 above), 41-44. Women in the GDR retired at age sixty. While age cohorts over forty continue to show gender imbalance in skill and qualification level, women now between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-five in the former GDR are well represented in the professions as a result of a major campaign undertaken after 1945 to draw women into higher education.

<sup>24</sup>Giordano (n. 6 above).

<sup>25</sup>"Abortion tourism" is nothing new. West German women have traveled to Denmark and the Netherlands for abortions legal there since the 1970s. Public attention was recently drawn to the issue when customs agents in Baden-Württemberg removed several women from trains returning from the Netherlands on suspicion of illegal abortion, forced them to have gynecological examinations, and charged them. They had, in fact, gotten medical certificates entitling them to legal abortions in West Germany but had not gone for mandatory pre-abortion counseling, without which abortions are forbidden. Counseling centers, with 90 percent funding from the Bonn government, are now being set up in the five new states of eastern Germany. Centers in the west are run primarily by the conservative Catholic Caritas organization, the Lutheran church, or Pro Familia, which also provide family planning and contraceptive counseling. Pro Familia



legality of abortion at the "scene of the crime" (*Tatort*)—an oddly contradictory bit of terminology—should govern. The SPD finally won by threatening to derail unification. Unfortunately, the abortion debate was primarily a political side show which did little for the pro-choice agenda and distracted attention from a number of other discriminatory or deeply flawed and ambiguous passages in the unification treaty.<sup>26</sup> West German social conservatism may be to some extent a result of the country's higher age curve: the FRG has a relatively low birth rate and a relatively high proportion of citizens sixty and older.<sup>27</sup> The older members of society tend to hold (and vote) the values of an earlier period, including gender prejudices and sex-role stereotypes. In Germany, these are the generations whose childhoods and young adulthoods were spent in the virulently racist and sexist German fascist school system and in Nazi youth organizations. The National Socialist regime systematically excluded women from higher education, the professions, the skilled trades, and the civil service; outlawed equal pay for women; and attempted to force "eugenically sound" women into lives of full-time housework and prolific motherhood.<sup>28</sup> Those who grew up in this era and the first postwar generation in West Germany experienced a complete absence of positive, nontraditional female role models. Beginning from the same point, the GDR's postwar development took a rather different course.

### A brief history of women's policy in the GDR

The living and working conditions of women in the GDR were to a large degree determined by state policies motivated by a mixture of economic,

---

runs 120 centers in the former FRG, and 60 percent of all women seeking an abortion use their services. Thus far, of sixty-nine centers set up in the former GDR, none have been awarded to Pro Familia, forty-nine are under church auspices, and twenty have been given to local government agencies. In response to a member of parliament's question, the state secretary for family policy, Roswitha Hülshof, stated: "The Federal government has no responsibility for financing sexual education counseling for the prevention of unwanted pregnancies." "Leicht ubergangen, Beim Ausbau der Schwangerschaftsberatung in der Ex-DDR bevorzugt Bonn konservative Organisationen" (Easily ignored, Bonn favors conservative organizations in the development of pregnancy counseling in the ex-GDR), *Der Spiegel* 45, no. 17 (April 22, 1991): 81.

<sup>26</sup>For example, a sentence empowering the Bonn government to "cancel unjustified payments and reduce inflated payments," which has been construed as the basis for intervening in the retirement system. Or language allowing the Bonn government to arbitrarily dismiss the East German judiciary and civil service.

<sup>27</sup>In 1987, slightly over 15 percent of the population was over age sixty-five and slightly under 15 percent under the age of fifteen. The FRG has registered a steady decline in the birth rate with more deaths than births every year since 1972; *Datenreport 1989: Zahlen und Fakten über die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Schriftenreihe Band 280, Hrg. Statistisches Bundesamt (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1989), 39–41.

<sup>28</sup>See Annemarie Troger, "The Creation of a Female Assembly-Line Proletariat," and Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany," both in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, ed. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984).

ideological, and pragmatic considerations. The GDR was founded in 1949 as a socialist state within the territory of the Soviet Occupation Zone. It was a remnant of a conservative, culturally homogeneous central European society that had been dislocated and institutionally delegitimized by fascism, military defeat, and occupation by a nation—the Soviet Union—it regarded as racially and culturally inferior. Its new leaders, communists and social democrats, returned from exile or from Nazi concentration camps ideologically committed to and politically and economically dependent on the support and labor of women.

Measures to achieve the legal and economic equality of women in the Eastern occupation zone were first instituted by the Soviet Military Administration in May 1945 and steadily expanded as an autonomous civil administration emerged in the GDR. Officials made special efforts to help reduce the economic burden of child raising and to encourage fertility. Financial support programs and social institutions were reorganized to facilitate simultaneous career advancement and motherhood, a dramatic reversal of Nazi policies.

To reintegrate women into the public sphere, Party and state administrators undertook a comprehensive revision of the legal code to guarantee full statutory equality for women and instituted a series of special laws and policies promoting women's education and training (e.g., paid time off for education and mandatory employer affirmative action plans and compliance reports at one- and five-year intervals). Legislation assured women maternity leave and benefits with guaranteed reemployment, sick leave, and paid time off for child care and housework. Economic measures instituted a broad range of transfer payments and subsidies and enforced equal pay for equal work. Political pressure and propaganda campaigns encouraged the integration of women into the professions and skilled trades, and the full integration of women into higher education.<sup>29</sup>

These efforts were motivated by the Party leadership's ideological commitment to the emancipation of women as well as the immediate economic necessity of drawing the largely untapped pool of female labor power into the depleted work force for reconstruction. While West Germany turned to importing labor from southern Europe instead of expanding female participation in the labor force, this option was not available to the East for both political and economic reasons. With an expanding economy and a continuing loss of population to the West,

<sup>29</sup>See Herta Kuhrig und Wulfram Speigner, eds., *Wie emanzipiert sind die Frauen in der DDR?* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1979); Friedel Schubert, *Die Frau in der DDR* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1980); for a short summary in English, Dorothy Rosenberg, "The Emancipation of Women in Fact and Fiction: Images and Role Models in GDR Literature," in *Women, State and Party in Eastern Europe*, ed. Sharon Wolchik and Alfred Meyer (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1985); see also Rueschemeyer and Schussler (n. 19 above) for a brief comparative history of women's policy.

women workers continued to be vital to the GDR economy.<sup>30</sup> By the 1980s, about 92 percent of working-age GDR women were either in training or employed outside the home (compared to 52 percent in the FRG).<sup>31</sup> The GDR's equally urgent need to maintain and expand its population led to the implementation of an exemplary program of maternity and child-care support.

In 1989, after forty years of active practical efforts to facilitate the legal emancipation and full social equality of women, the GDR was a society in which the structural details of emancipation were largely in place and—to a degree somewhat breathtaking to the outsider—taken for granted by the vast majority of the population. As noted above, these measures, which must be seen as a form of positive discrimination toward women, are now being rolled back in many areas to conform with a far weaker set of social guarantees and protections in the Federal Republic.<sup>32</sup>

### Policy efforts and real outcomes

Despite the GDR's extensive structural framework to support the emancipation of women, an overview of the GDR economy revealed a pronounced gender-specific division of labor, which in some cases amounted to a gender classification of entire trades and in others suggested a pattern of assignment of women qualified equally with men to

<sup>30</sup>The West German government did not recognize GDR citizenship and claimed for itself the right to represent all "Germans." This meant that on reaching West German territory (including FRG embassies) any GDR citizen could immediately claim all the rights and privileges of West German citizenship. In practice, the West German government funded a special program guaranteeing jobs, apartments, cash grants, and interest-free loans and other special benefits for GDR citizens who chose to come to or remain in the West. These programs were canceled shortly after travel restrictions were removed in late 1989. A further problem is defining who is a "German." Large numbers of Polish and Soviet citizens, among others, continue to claim German citizenship based on distant ancestors or service in the German Army or SS in the Second World War.

<sup>31</sup>Eva Hein and Klaus Rosenfeld (*Frauen in Ausbildung und Beruf* [Berlin: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1985], 49) show a figure of 91.1 percent for 1984. Winkler (n. 8 above), 55, shows the same percentage for 1989. In 1988, 48.9 percent of the labor force was female (*Statistisches Taschenbuch der DDR 1989* [Berlin: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1989], 38).

<sup>32</sup>This is especially true with respect to employment. Only about one-third of the West German female labor force shows an unbroken career pattern, another third leaves the labor force permanently after the birth of a child, and the rest stop working for an extended period because of family responsibilities. While the GDR had an extensive network of affirmative action employment, further education, and reintegration programs, there are no similar measures in the FRG to help women return to work after a family-related absence. For a thorough comparison of women and family policy in the two Germanies, see Helwig (n. 23 above). For the most recent and authoritative study of the family in the GDR, see Jutta Gysi, ed., *Familienleben in der DDR: Zum Alltag von Familien mit Kindern* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989).

lesser tasks. Equal pay for equal work was fully established but did not address pay differentials between traditionally male and female occupations. Women tended more often than men to work in part-time positions because of family responsibilities, to accept jobs beneath their qualifications to be near home, or to postpone career advancement because of small children. All of these factors left the average woman's income at approximately 75–80 percent of the average man's. In addition, time-budget studies and sociological surveys revealed that housework and child care continued to be seen as primarily female responsibilities.<sup>33</sup>

While significantly improving women's social status and condition, GDR society clearly exhibited the continuing influence of traditional culture. After first bringing women into the labor force in the 1950s and 1960s, the GDR government consistently followed a relatively contradictory policy of integrating women into the professions and into technical and administrative positions without reevaluating traditionally "female" industries or introducing women in any numbers into the skilled trades. The result was a high degree of female representation in the professions alongside continuing gender segregation of the rest of the labor force. What appears to have been achieved was a relatively successful gender integration among intellectuals and very little change within the working class.<sup>34</sup>

### Women and politics, 1989–90

The numbing litany of social policy cuts and the daily announcements of plant closures, mass layoffs, short time, and bankruptcies that followed currency union and unification are in sharp contrast to the mood in the fall and winter of 1989–90. Women marched and led protests, organized demonstrations, wrote, talked, and produced leaflets. They were inspired and delighted by the sudden opening of the democratic reform process and by the hope of constructing a humane socialist society based on solidarity, equality, and justice. When the opposition movements New Forum, Democracy Now, the Greens, and the Initiative for

<sup>33</sup>See Hildegard M. Nickel, "Sex-Role Socialization in Relationships as a Function of the Division of Labor: A Sociological Explanation for the Reproduction of Gender Differences," in *The Quality of Life in the German Democratic Republic: Changes and Developments in a State Socialist Society*, ed. Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Christiane Lemke (Armonk: M. E. Sharp, 1989), 48–58; see also Hildegard M. Nickel, "Geschlechtersozialization und Arbeitsteilung" (Gender-role socialization and the division of labor), in *Weimarer Beiträge* 34, no. 4 (April 1988); Jutta Menschik and Evelyn Leopold, *Gretchen's rote Schwester: Frauen in der DDR* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1974), 196 ff.; Eva Kaufmann, "Interview mit Irmtraud Morgner," *Weimarer Beiträge* 30, no. 9 (September 1984): 1500–1502.

<sup>34</sup>See Irene Dolling, "Culture and Gender," in Rueschemeyer and Lemke, eds., 27–47.

Freedom and Human Rights (among others) proved unwilling or unable to support feminist positions—such as a pro-choice plank assuring free access to abortion during the first trimester or a guarantee of minimum gender quotas for party leadership positions—a group of Berlin feminists, the Fraueninitiative Lila Offensive, invited other GDR women's groups to meet in Berlin on December 3, to discuss organizing a feminist coalition. Over a thousand women attended, representing women's groups and projects from across the GDR and women's caucuses within existing parties. They voted to found the Unabhängiger Frauenverband (UVF; Autonomous women's association).

After initial resistance, delegates from the UVF were seated as voting members of the Central Round Table in Berlin, an institution formed under the auspices of the Lutheran church to provide a regular public forum for the nonsocialist parties and opposition movements. The SED government had resigned and been replaced by an interim coalition Government of National Reconciliation, which consulted with the Central Round Table and then accepted one minister without portfolio from each opposition group, including the UVF, into the cabinet.

Round tables, in which women played a major role, sprang up in cities and towns across the GDR and either worked with or replaced the discredited Party-controlled mayors and councils. The period from December 3, 1989, when the SED Party central committee resigned, to March 18, 1990, when the first free elections were held, could be characterized as an interlude of direct democracy in the GDR. (The elections were moved up from May 6 as a West German condition for financial aid, which was then nevertheless withheld.) For the first time in German history,<sup>35</sup> citizens directly influenced, and in many cases ran, the civil administration, through councils and grass-roots initiatives. Sentiment in the streets, however, had already begun to shift from reform to reunification. The composition of the crowds at the Leipzig Monday night peace marches, which had been the symbolic core of the democratic opposition movement, became increasingly male, aggressive, and explicitly nationalist. After women had been booed and whistled off the speakers' platform several weeks in a row, most women demonstrators withdrew in the face of the increasingly threatening atmosphere. In response, the Lutheran church withdrew its organizational support; the Monday demonstrations ceased in January 1990.<sup>36</sup> The West German political parties, CDU/CSU, SPD, and Free Democratic Party (FDP), had begun pouring funds and election materials into their East German subsidiaries. The

<sup>35</sup>Ande, perhaps, from the short-lived workers' councils (*Räte*) during the winter of 1918–19.

<sup>36</sup>They were revived in the early spring of 1991 to protest rising unemployment and cuts in social welfare programs.

March 18 election campaign began under West German pressure and took place on West German terms. The chance for democratic reform from within had been lost.

While better gender-integrated than the FRG at lower and middle levels, the GDR consistently displayed a significant underrepresentation of women at the highest levels of political and economic power.<sup>37</sup> Although increasing female participation does not appear to have affected the status of the professions,<sup>38</sup> "female" roles, behaviors, and qualities continued to be less valued by society.<sup>39</sup> This, along with continued responsibility for children and family, affected both the level of female participation in public life and the public perception of women in the economic and, especially, the political sphere. Although 52 percent of judges were women, women constituted only 27.2 percent of mayors and 32.2 percent of members of parliament. The former was an appointive position, the latter two were elective.<sup>40</sup>

This small contrast between appointive and elective positions crystallizes the problem of a centrally administered attempt to revise the gender-specific division of labor in a society still largely dominated by traditional role models and gender prejudices. In this regard the radical changes of 1989 had even more negative consequences for women. While GDR women held 32.2 percent of the seats in Parliament and composed 38 percent of district councils in 1989, they retained only a 20.2 percent representation in the new Parliament after the highly touted "first free elections" of March 18, 1990, and their numbers continued to fall with each election.<sup>41</sup> The UFV ran a joint slate with the Green Party in the March 18 election. Although the coalition won eight seats in the new Parliament, none of the UFV candidates was seated.<sup>42</sup> This first taste of

<sup>37</sup>For example, 52.8 percent of college and university students in the GDR in 1980 were women, but they received only 30 percent of the doctorates and 13.7 percent of the tenured positions awarded that year. *Das Bildungswesen in der DDR* (Berlin: Volk & Wissen, 1983), 157–58. A comparative study of university and professional school salaries showed that women held 25–33 percent of the positions in the top three salary classifications; however, outside of education and trade, where they held slightly over 5 percent, women rarely rose above 2–3 percent of top management staff (Winkler, 92–94; see also Helwig, 46–51).

<sup>38</sup>Compared to the Soviet Union, e.g., where the medical profession is dominated by women and is considered a low-status and low-income profession.

<sup>39</sup>See Dölling, "Culture and Gender."

<sup>40</sup>Hein and Rosenfeld, 76; and *Statistisches Taschenbuch* 1987, 18.

<sup>41</sup>Cited from Irene Dölling, "Between Hope and Helplessness—Women after the 'Wende' in the GDR," *Feminist Review* (1991), forthcoming.

<sup>42</sup>Because of their different size, the coalition agreement between the Greens and the UFV stipulated a 2:1 division of seats. The German electoral system uses party candidate lists, so in each district the Green-UFV coalition list was printed with the Green party candidates' names in the first two spaces and a UFV candidate third, and so on. Since the coalition did not win more than two seats in any district, the Greens interpreted the agreement to mean that they had won all eight seats and refused to include

electoral politics as well as the general election results had an intensely demoralizing effect on feminist organizers.

A number of highly visible posts within the interim GDR government (May–December 1990) went to activist women: minister of labor and social policy (Regine Hildebrandt), minister for women and family (Christa Schmidt), state secretary for foreigners (Almut Berger), and state secretary for the equality of men and women (Marina Beyer). These women consistently drew public attention to the concerted attack on women's economic independence and social rights, but to very little effect. When Beyer publicly objected to the government's failure to provide her office with copies of proposed legislation to review for possibly discriminatory effects, as was mandatory, the responsible minister (Reichenbach) did not bother to respond.<sup>43</sup> Hildebrandt eventually resigned in protest at the government's handling of labor issues.<sup>44</sup> By May the ruling GDR coalition had given up any serious pretense of acting as other than a puppet of the Bonn government.

After a bitter debate between the CDU/CSU and the SPD in Bonn, it was decided to hold parallel elections in the east and west.<sup>45</sup> The GDR groups were thus given one chance in the December 2 all-German elections to establish their legitimacy by winning the support of at least 5 percent of the East German electorate before having to confront the insurmountable obstacle of having to attract 5 percent of all German voters. The East German parties with a West German partner—the CDU, SPD, Deutsche Soziale Union (DSU), and Liberal Democrats (LDP)—enjoyed significant organizational and financial advantages. Even the requirement of 5 percent of the former GDR electorate effectively forced most of the small, new, independent GDR parties and citizens' groups out of the election while the better established groups formed election coalitions. Despite their negative experience with the Greens in the March election, the UFV rejoined the Green/Bündnis 90 coalition (New Forum, Democracy Now, the Initiative for Freedom and Human Rights, Unified Left) for the December elections, the political necessity of a joint cam-

---

any UFV candidates in their parliamentary groups on the grounds that none of them had been elected by name.

<sup>43</sup>*Berliner Zeitung* (May 5, 1990), 6.

<sup>44</sup>She ran and won in the Brandenburg state elections in October 1990 and now holds the position of state minister for labor and social policy.

<sup>45</sup>The CDU/CSU favored parallel elections, requiring parties to gather only 5 percent of the votes in either the old or the new states if they ran on separate tickets. The CDU/CSU strategists expected the opposition groups to draw votes away from the SPD. The SPD insisted on a joint election, forcing parties to attract 5 percent of the total votes cast in both parts of Germany, which would have frozen out the GDR opposition along with the GDR socialist party (PDS) and made the SPD the only viable alternative to the left of the CDU/CSU and the FDP.

paign more significant than the multiple disagreements among the coalition partners.

The UFV and the other opposition groups have a better chance of surviving as separate entities on the local level but still face the significant handicaps of poor funding, lack of organizational experience, and West German competition. West German election law does not include residency requirements, and many West Germans now hold elective as well as appointive offices throughout the GDR. In an August 1990 interview, Ingrid Köppe, chair of the Greens/Bündnis 90 opposition coalition, criticized the lack of any public discussion of election rules and gave a pessimistic, if realistic, assessment of the coalition's future role as a primarily extraparlimentary opposition.<sup>46</sup>

As noted above, the Greens/Bündnis 90 coalition did pass the separate 5 percent mark in the former GDR, entitling them to seats in the Bundestag and to federal funding. Whether the democratic opposition survives as an alternative to the established parties on the national level depends on these disparate groups' ability to make the coalition function and to cooperate despite their political and philosophical differences.

### Feminist activism and East-West cooperation

When censorship collapsed in the spring of 1990 and free access to printing services became available, new feminist publications quickly followed. *Ypsilon*, founded and edited by a feminist collective in Berlin, began publication in July 1990 at very sophisticated artistic and technical levels. The large-format magazine featured glossy, multicolored covers along with original artwork, photocollages, graphics and photo-overlays, sophisticated layouts, and design features that sometimes nearly obscured the content. Its articles were varied, searching, and thoroughly feminist. *Ypsilon* was an impressive example of what women could do if given the chance. The venture folded after four issues, however, a victim of insufficient funding, editorial feuding, and its publisher's lack of commercial experience. The magazine was revived in April 1991 as a less ambitious, smaller-format journal with a reduced editorial staff, but its future remains uncertain.

At the first meeting of the UFV, several journalists from the staid Party women's magazine *Für Dich* pledged to force their editorial board to accept feminist articles. *Für Dich* quickly changed its format and its political stance to include interviews with the new women leaders and to

<sup>46</sup>"BRD wird sich ein grosses Protestpotential einhandeln" (FRG will get a large potential for protests in the bargain), *Neues Deutschland* (August 30, 1990), 6.



focus articles on unemployment, the closing of day-care centers, and discrimination against women and minorities. By summer 1990, the magazine had again been transformed, this time—by new management—to compete with West German women's magazines. The political coverage was gone without a trace, replaced by recipes, fashion stories, and knitting patterns. *Frau anders*, a photocopied lesbian newsletter produced by a group in Leipzig, continues to survive because it provides useful information without challenging a media market share. The speed with which these projects blossomed is a direct reflection of the level that feminist consciousness had attained in the GDR before the events of 1989–90. The speed of their disappearance is evidence of the march of market forces and an economic struggle for which GDR feminists were almost completely unprepared.

The "double burden" of family and paid labor and its practical as well as social-psychological effects became a focus of concern among Western feminists and scholars in the early 1970s. The GDR leadership defined this as a pragmatic rather than theoretical problem and committed itself to palliative measures without reopening the question of the male-female division of reproductive labor, thus seeking to avoid a tangle of social, political, and philosophical complications. "Double burden" was extensively discussed in the GDR, as were gender role models and the social division of labor, but the public discussion of these issues took place primarily in literature rather than in the social sciences. At the 1987 Writer's Congress, the author and playwright Christoph Hein thanked the media for turning the GDR into a country of novel readers: "Our press, our media are responsible. Their restraint in reporting the news and their reliable consensus of opinion result in the fact that hardly a single citizen of our country has to spend more than a minute or two on them . . . before returning to our books."<sup>47</sup> Given the state's restriction of access to or publication of certain statistical information, the subjective reflection of GDR life in fiction was frequently used by Western feminists and by East German cultural theorists, sociologists, and political scientists as a point of reference to support analyses of women in GDR society.<sup>48</sup>

This does not mean there was no feminist discussion or research on women in the GDR but that both took place under different conditions than in the West. GDR scholars performed a great deal of state-funded research on women and the problems of women in society, including the

<sup>47</sup>Christoph Hein, "Arbeitsgruppe IV: Literatur und Wirkung," *X. Schriftstellerkongress der DDR* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1988), 232–33.

<sup>48</sup>For examples of social scientists' use of fiction, see Anita M. Mallinckrodt, *The Environmental Dialogue in the GDR* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987); Christiane Lemke, "Socialization and Politics in the GDR: The Ambivalent Role of the Family," in *Studies in GDR Culture and Society*, vol. 7 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 33–41.

problems of combining career and motherhood, career choice motivation and level of qualification, women in leadership positions, the desire for children and reasons for abortion, the situation of single mothers, and the presence of gender-specific differences in socialization and career paths. Irene Dölling, a cultural theorist and cofounder of the GDR's first women's studies center, argues that although this research produced a great deal of important and useful data, it cannot be called "feminist" because it was neither carried out from a "clearly formulated subjective research perspective" nor intended to "place women in a position to act in their own interests." Instead, it located the problems of women within the framework of the interests of the state. Dölling sharply criticizes this body of research even though it confirmed the disadvantaged position of women in society. She argues that it failed to provide any analysis of the causes of observed gender disparities and that lack of an analytical framework ultimately influenced the interpretation of fact.<sup>49</sup> Hildegard Maria Nickel, a sociologist and also a cofounder of the women's studies center, draws a distinction between "research on women" and "feminist research" and argues that motivation and control of research, as well as content, are vital to a feminist undertaking.<sup>50</sup> What was lacking in the GDR was a public, feminist analysis of the large body of research on women.<sup>51</sup>

Despite increasing limitations during the last decade on what could be published in the GDR, feminist scholars there were well informed. They had had access to Western feminist literature for years and had increasingly received permission to travel to Western meetings and conferences and to publish articles in Western publications. They passed their experiences on to their students in classes and seminars on women's literature and women's culture within the university system. The Women's Studies Center (Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Frauenforschung [ZIF]) at the Humboldt University in East Berlin opened in December 1989, the outgrowth of an interdisciplinary feminist discussion group that had been

<sup>49</sup>Irene Dölling, "Situation und Perspektiven von Frauenforschung in der DDR" (Situation and future of women's research in the GDR), *ZIF Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (June 1990): 1-2.

<sup>50</sup>Hildegard Maria Nickel, "Frauen in der DDR," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (From politics and contemporary history [suppl. to the weekly newspaper *Das Parlament*]), suppl. B, nos. 16-17 (1990), 41-42.

<sup>51</sup>Irene Dölling and Hildegard Maria Nickel were not the only explicit feminists in the former GDR. In addition to the interdisciplinary feminist study group to which they belonged, another circle gathered around Eva Kaufmann, a professor of German literature at Humboldt University who specialized in women's literature and feminist criticism. All of these scholars published articles and monographs in the GDR as well as articles in the FRG. A special issue of the West German journal *Feministische Studien*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter 1990), titled "Zwischenzeiten—Frauenforschung aus der DDR" (Between times—women's research from the GDR) includes, in addition to Dölling and Nickel, Petra Clemens, Beate Schönfeldt, Dorothea Böck, Renate Reschke, and Helga Mobius.

meeting for nearly ten years. The proposal to open the center had been approved by the university in the summer of 1989, before the political upheaval began.

With the opening of the border on November 9, 1989, East-West contacts burgeoned. A joint feminist lecture series was organized for spring 1990 and lectures held alternately at the Technical University in West Berlin and the Humboldt University in East Berlin. West German women attended the founding sessions of the UFV in December 1989 and February 1990 and helped organize a joint East-West Women's Congress on April 27–29, 1990, in both parts of the city. Joint publications were planned, and a number of East-West support networks were set up. East-West feminist cooperation has not been without its problems. East German feminists were eager to learn from the practical experience of their West German counterparts: how to publish, how to organize, how to raise funds, how to lobby for projects—all skills they were unable to acquire under the former regime. West German feminists, coming from an established, politically activist women's movement, tend to assume a much lower level of feminist consciousness and sophistication in the GDR than in the West, put off by East German women's more traditional appearance and family relationships and generally ignorant of GDR women's relative economic independence and favorable social status. The GDR feminist activists perceive this attitude as arrogant and as a typically Western attempt to dominate joint projects.<sup>52</sup> Western feminist separatism, feminist essentialism, and radical feminism are all barriers to understanding and cooperation with East German feminists grounded in Marxist analysis, a socialist tradition of inclusion, and a clear focus on economic and political as well as social and psychological structures. Finally, West German feminists in fact remain politically marginal within their own society. Despite a mutually recognized need to cooperate in defense of the far more women-friendly social policies of the GDR,<sup>53</sup> neither group was working from a stable, broad political base.

### A feminist analysis of the GDR

In the March 1990 election, 46 percent of all GDR women voters supported the CDU-led conservative Alliance, a party coalition that op-

<sup>52</sup>See "Dialog: Kein Einigland von Schwestern—West-Emanzen und Ost-Mutts" (Dialogue: No united land of sisters—western women's libbers and eastern mommies) *Ypsilon* 1, no. 5 (Spring 1991): 18.

<sup>53</sup>A recent article by Elke Mockler, Beate Ruther, and Birgit Sauer, "Frauen- und Familienpolitik: Wie frauenfreundlich war die DDR?" *Deutschland Archiv* 45, no. 11 (September 1990):1700–1705, attacks the positive evaluation of GDR social policy measures as "myths" and rejects them as preferable to the West German system. Unfortunately, the authors fail to mention or compare the West German regulations and distort the GDR system. The article is to be read more as partisan ideological struggle than feminist critique.

posed abortion, day care, and affirmative action. As Irene Dölling wrote, "These results had a disappointing and sobering effect . . . they made clear that the vast majority of women in the GDR have no interest in emancipatory or feminist ideas and practices."<sup>54</sup> Dölling and Nickel have led other feminist theorists in undertaking an analysis of the non- or even antiemancipatory effects of what they term a "patriarchal-paternalist" state.

Dölling's working theory is that the GDR's progressive social policies, by reducing the contradictions between paid work and family responsibilities, obscured the underlying patriarchal power hierarchy and reinforced the traditional assignment of gender roles. Moreover, the centralization of authority within the state hierarchy and the role of the state as the ultimate provider did not emancipate women, but made them even more dependent. The patriarchal-paternalist state discouraged initiative, forbade criticism, and rewarded passivity.<sup>55</sup> Nickel goes further, arguing that "the patriarchal construction of equal rights policies almost completely relieved men of their responsibilities as fathers and husbands, from their duties to the next generation and to the mothers of their children," and reinforced women's exclusive responsibility for the family.<sup>56</sup> Dölling concurs, noting that "three out of four GDR emigrees to the FRG have been male; many left wives and children behind, also surely with the conviction that 'Father State' will take care of their responsibilities."<sup>57</sup>

Dölling's earlier work had questioned the emancipatory potential of simply moving women into the labor force, believing this to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for the true equality of women in society. In a 1988 article, she described the persistence of traditional relations between the sexes as "quite functional for the first stages of development of socialism" and continued, "Equality of women . . . presupposes a qualitative change in all social relations as well as in the subjective structures of women and men. For this to occur a long historical period is still necessary."<sup>58</sup> An article by Nickel in the same year called for state intervention to correct gender tracking and labor force segregation.<sup>59</sup>

One of the responses to years of censorship and inability to criticize the state or its policies directly has been a self-referencing phase of blaming the state for everything, including social structures and behaviors (such as child-support delinquent fathers) that are more or less universal

<sup>54</sup>Irene Dölling, "Zwischen Hoffnung und Hilflosigkeit: Frauen nach der 'Wende' in der DDR" (April 1990, typescript), 2.

<sup>55</sup>Dölling, "Situation und Perspektiven von Frauenforschung in der DDR," 3 ff.

<sup>56</sup>Hildegard Maria Nickel, "Frauen auf dem Spring in die Marktwirtschaft," *Ypsilon* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 26.

<sup>57</sup>Dölling, "Situation und Perspektiven von Frauenforschung in der DDR" (n. 49 above), 10.

<sup>58</sup>Dölling, "Culture and Gender" (n. 34 above), 31.

<sup>59</sup>Nickel, "Sex Role Socialization" (n. 33 above).

in Western society.<sup>60</sup> The state is criticized for both exerting too much control and not having gone far enough. I believe that this will develop into a more distanced and comparative analysis in the face of direct exposure to Western social practices. Indeed, Dölling's most recent project, evaluating diaries kept by fifty women in the former GDR from September to December 1990, addresses both the impact of the open sexism of West German society (pornography, the second-class status of women, de-skilling) on the writers and the complex and contradictory nature of women's daily life experience within the state socialist system.<sup>61</sup>

Dölling's proposition that the "patriarchal-paternalist" state necessarily produced and enforced dependency was a response to the failure of most GDR women to take advantage of opportunities in 1989–90 to become politically active in their own interests. Shocked by women's political passivity and apathy in the face of clearly articulated threats to their well-being, GDR feminist theorists and activists tried to find an explanation for women voting against their own social and economic interests. I find Dölling's and Nickel's analysis persuasive but not necessarily system-specific. My own research on GDR women's perception of their social status, as reflected in literature and public discussions of it, raises several questions.

Although GDR feminists had already been aware of GDR women's failure to appreciate their relative privileging within East German society, they were unaware of how nearly invisible the extensive system of transfer payments, subsidized day care, family and parental leave, free health care, free abortion, and affirmative action programs was to most women. Feminists also seriously underestimated GDR women's almost complete ignorance of women's conditions in the West. The vast majority of GDR women simply assumed that, like the array of consumer goods, social welfare policy in West Germany had to be superior to that in the East.

Second, GDR feminists seriously overestimated GDR women's commitment to defending their status of relative privilege *as women* within the GDR compared to their interest in achieving a West German standard of living as quickly as possible. Seen in this light, GDR women voting for the CDU were not voting against their own perceived interests, nor were they being politically passive in doing so. They were placing a broad category, economic interests—perceived immediate and significant eco-

<sup>60</sup>A recent newspaper article on child poverty in the United States reported that only slightly over 40 percent of fathers made child-support payments for longer than four months (*New York Times* [March 2, 1991], metropolitan ed., B1).

<sup>61</sup>Irene Dölling, "Man lebt jetzt regelrecht von Tag zu Tag, weil nichts mehr sicher ist: Zu Veränderungen im Alltag von Frauen in den neuen Bundesländer" ("We live from day to day now, because nothing is certain anymore": On changes in the daily lives of women in the new federal states), in a special issue of *The Berliner Journal* on the status of women in the former GDR and the United States, ed. Hildegard M. Nickel and Marilyn Rueschemeyer (1992), in press.

nomic gain—ahead of what they saw as a narrower one, “women’s interests”—a position of relative privilege within an economy of relative scarcity. I believe that these women voters’ failure to perceive this as a conflicted choice was due, at least partly, to ignorance of the real contradiction between these categories in the West.

A large body of research has shown the persistence of women’s culturally conditioned tendency to place the needs of others—children, family, community—above their own interests. While this also may have played a role in GDR women’s voting behavior after the decisive March 1990 election, I believe that East German women only began to become informed about West German social policy after unification was well under way and that they were uniformly shocked to discover they would lose a significant number of rights and privileges in the process. Many responded to the discovery that West German women’s and family programs were inferior to the GDR system of social services by arguing that the state’s expenditures on transfer payments and subsidies were a key reason for its economic failure. Based on my own, admittedly personal and unscientific sample, a surprising number of women seem to have reached this conclusion by reasoning backward: if West Germany did not provide benefits equal to or better than the East, it had to be because the state could not afford them. Thus, by definition, a successful economy could not support the financial burden of social welfare. The ingrained belief in an essentially benevolent patriarchal-paternal state seems to be reflected in this attitude, as well as a corresponding lack of awareness that social policy decisions reflect social agendas based on political convictions and are not simply the result of some iron law of economic function. The West German belief that mothers should remain in the private sphere and care for small children in the home is reflected in political measures such as tax breaks for single-earner families and lack of public day-care facilities.<sup>62</sup> The East German belief that women, including mothers, should be active in the public sphere and economically self-supporting justifies taxing society at large to supply families with day care. These different social-political programs are both consistent with industrial society but assign the costs of reproductive labor differently.

The GDR did go further than any Western nation to recognize reproductive labor and to socialize partially some of its aspects by removing them from the home—through state-subsidized day care for all children and provision of a state-subsidized hot main meal to virtually everyone from two-year-olds in day care to home-bound pensioners. But it did not or could not do away with social and economic dependence on the un-

<sup>62</sup>See Rueschemeyer and Schissler (n. 19 above) for a description of the historical development of West German “housewife” prejudices in women and family policy.

paid reproductive labor of women in the home. In practice, as GDR feminists have noted, some state measures to reward reproductive labor, such as the "housework day"—one paid day off per month for married women, mothers, and women over thirty—served to reinforce the already powerful social conviction that reproductive labor is a female responsibility. The question of the economic dependence of all economic systems—capitalist, socialist, or mixed—on the unpaid reproductive labor of women requires much more investigation.

## Conclusion

Dölling's and Nickel's well-founded critique of the reinforcement of women's traditional roles within state socialism are disturbing to a Western feminist more familiar with the negative effects of a system that enforces economic and psychological dependency on an individual patriarch rather than on an abstract state. It also leaves open the question of the distinction between entitlement and dependency. Given that women are unlikely to stop having children, the significant variable remains the context within which they do so. Without state intervention, access to both the economic and political realms of the public sphere remains a class-based privilege available to only the small minority of women able to pay other (generally lower-class) women to perform domestic duties for them. A more dynamic issue is whether GDR women will remain passive in the face of mass unemployment and a forced return to the domestic sphere or whether the experience of disenfranchisement will have an activating effect. West German women are also affected as the economic costs of unification are translated into cuts in West German social spending. While women's groups in both parts of Germany continue to expand their cooperation, the current climate is hardly favorable for women.

Under the old conditions of the GDR, women writers, sociologists, cultural theorists, political scientists, and others described and researched the partial gains made by women under state socialism as well as their ongoing inequality within GDR society. Writers of fiction probably contributed most effectively to consciousness-raising among GDR women, while social scientists provided statistical and theoretical analyses to state authorities or to one another. In the old system, change could only come from above, although pressure could be applied from below. Hildegard Nickel's suggestion of ways the state could intervene to correct the educational and career tracking that her research revealed falls under the old strategy. Research published by Nickel, Dölling, and others since fall 1989 attempts both to clear the air by saying directly what could not be said openly before and to come to terms with the past by examining what

was and is. Such research is also an attempt to find and speak to a wider audience of women in both parts of Germany. Feminists in the GDR focused on describing the discrepancies between theory and practice in the emancipation of women and on bringing these contradictions insistently to the attention of an at least presumably pro-emancipation state. Feminists in the united Germany must shift tactically to working with small groups within a complex political structure that has a far less transparent power hierarchy and no presumption of women-friendly ruling forces. While the lines at first appeared to be more clearly drawn within this new context, the difficulty of defining "women's interests" broadly enough to include all women and narrowly enough to constitute a defensible political program is significant. Working in small groups to exert pressure on specific issues is both philosophically cleaner and more practical but brings with it intergroup competition, fragmentation, and political ineffectiveness. Women in the eastern and western parts of Germany share many interests but continue to have different problems—or similar problems but different priorities. A clear analysis of the complex economic, political, social, and psychological structures that shape the lives of all German women, as well as the development of methods and patterns of cooperation and mutual support, remain necessary preconditions for positive change.

*Department of German  
Mount Holyoke College*



---

# Some Aspects of the Changing Situation of Women in Hungary

*Julia Szalai*

THE COLLAPSE of the communist regimes in East-Central Europe has revealed significant differences in the situation of women in the respective countries, differences which have been strengthened by varied economic and political developments in the region in the last two or three years. The existence of these remarkable differences is a surprise in itself: one would have expected that the uniformity of political structure, the similarities of economy, and the impact of the same ruling ideology would have led to more "standardization" in social relations as well.

Seemingly, history has not confirmed such assumptions, which raises a number of puzzling questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered on the basis of our present knowledge. For example, Why is it that the democratization of political life has led to the emergence of significant women's movements in some countries (especially in Poland and in the former German Democratic Republic), while women seem more reluctant to enter the political stage in others?<sup>1</sup> Or, Why does the transition toward a market economy affect women more in some countries than in others? What are the social, economic, and institutional factors behind women's relatively high risk of becoming unemployed in Poland and their relatively lower rate in the "new reserve army" in Hungary? Does one have to look for explanatory differences in the privatization processes in the two countries, or are more deeply rooted sociological and historical factors involved? One also wonders about the social, cultural, and political causes of varying family and population policies in the

<sup>1</sup> For example, the new women's movements had a significant role in postponing the extension of rigid West German abortion restrictions to women living in the formerly socialist sections of the reunified Germany; Polish women also reported some success in their campaigns for women's rights in controlling childbirth and improving social services to deal with increasing female unemployment. See the presentation by Jolanta Plak-wic from the Feminist Society in Poland and by Beate Gac from the Women's Group of Solidarity at the seminar titled "East, West, South, North: No Democracy without Women," organized by the European Parliament in Strasbourg, March 3, 1991; or Jacqueline Heinen, "The Impact of Social Policy on the Behavior of Women Workers in Poland and East Germany," *Critical Social Policy* (Fall 1990).

region. Can one explain the move toward restrictions on abortions in some countries and the liberalism in others, for instance, simply in terms of the different political orientations and party structures of the given societies? Or, here again, does one have to go back to divergent religious traditions, social aspirations, and historically rooted norms of family life?

It will be the task of comparative sociohistorical researchers to find adequate explanations for such questions. In this essay, I have the very modest aim of contributing to such a huge, collective enterprise by giving a short account of some of the recent developments in only one country, Hungary. I will attempt to describe the quite peculiar processes of the transition from a state-ruled to a market economy in Hungarian society, processes that were not begun by the political changes of 1989–90 (as is the case in most of the countries in the region) but that had started long before. In fact, it is more precise to say that the political changes themselves were the outcomes of a long-term erosion of the former state-socialist structure under the rule of the Communist party's first secretary, János Kádár, an erosion that gradually permeated all institutions and relations in the spheres of production, distribution, and consumption, as well as in everyday life. As I will try to demonstrate, women had a major role in this erosion, even if women's influence did not manifest itself in the classically political forms of social movements or governmental and institutional decision making.

The vehicle of this gradual erosion was the second economy, a vast informal sphere of production, which had much more significance in Hungary than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. A peculiarity of the Hungarian system during the last two or three decades has been that daily participation in one or another form of informal productive activity on top of people's regular work in the state-controlled socialist firms gradually became an unwritten norm. The second economy was based on the cooperation and active participation of the family as a unit. Women not only shared with men a massive work load, but helped meet the quite sophisticated organizational requirements of second-economy small "businesses" as well, "to keep them going" in the broadest sense of the phrase. Families consciously used women's wage earning capacities to find the optimal combination of family participation in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. While participation in the formal sector was dictated by the legal, administrative, and financial regulations of the state socialist order and was required for access to social services,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Entrance into the socialist labor force was not merely a financial issue, but a matter of social membership as well. Eligibility rights based on citizenship were substituted by ones based on having regular and continuous employment, now the only way of gaining access to basic services like child care, medical care, family allowances, sick benefits, or pensions. Even the right to apply for passports was attached to a certificate that people could get only at their workplace or at other officially acceptable institutions such as schools.

participation in the informal sector was dictated by family needs and aspirations for a relatively high standard of living, a standard that could best be met through family production in an institutionalized context. The ongoing work of optimizing and balancing these often conflicting pursuits—simultaneous participation in the socialist wage economy and in the family-based second economy—required intellectual skills such as planning, administration, and organization, and depended upon the tricky juggling of time, energy, relationships, and material resources. Hungarian women have become expert at such compromising and juggling.

The success achieved by a substantial number of families can best be measured by their relative affluence and modern standard of living despite the low earnings that could be gained in the centrally controlled, formal spheres of production.<sup>3</sup> Productivity in the second economy has been able to preserve this standard even amid the worsening conditions of the 1980s; while the rapidly falling productivity of the state-run economy has led to growing yearly inflation and decreasing real wages, most families have reacted by intensifying their work in the informal sector. Thus the second economy has been effective in postponing and counteracting the general impoverishment and social disorganization of Hungarian society over at least the last decade.<sup>4</sup>

Without taking into account women's experience in the second economy, one cannot find adequate explanations of their substantial participation as co-owners or managers in the country's rapidly expanding private small enterprises, of their relatively low unemployment rates, or even of the motivations behind their increased and well-planned educational activities. The experience of organizing their lives to participate simultaneously in the formal and informal spheres of production has induced remarkable changes in women's habits, orientations, and aspirations.

To refine my argument about the centrality of the second economy for understanding recent economic and political changes in Hungary, I

<sup>3</sup> One of the arguments used by the socialist state to legitimate the leveling down of personal earnings was its promise to deliver a number of services free of charge or much below market prices and to establish a new system of social security exclusively for those employed in the socialist spheres of the national economy. The price of education, health service, housing, transportation, and the like were not built into personal disposable incomes. At the same time, the forms of delivery of these services were monopolized by the state; people had no other choice than to become socialist employees not only because they had no resources to buy those services on the market, but because the market itself had disappeared.

<sup>4</sup> The findings of the recent time-budget and household surveys testify to this argument. For detailed data and analysis, see *Changes in the Way of Life of the Hungarian Society* (Budapest: Central Statistical Office [hereafter cited as CSO], 1990); and *Reports of the Household Surveys* of 1983, 1985, 1987, and 1989.

should make two additional comments. First, although some of the data presented in detail here indicate that women's participation in the second economy has reinforced the traditional family roles in which men are the main wage earners and women the main caregivers, those patterns have changed a lot in their character, content, and social meaning. The seeming reproduction of the old models has been accompanied by women's extensive and increasing participation in employment and other activities outside the household. As a consequence, women have gained substantial independence and autonomy, although within the bounds of traditional marriage and family life. Fragile compromises were needed for women to balance the often contradictory requirements of self-determined career expectations and the acceptance of patriarchal relationships with their spouses. The high divorce rates for which Hungary is famous may well be a result of tensions inherent in this situation.

Second, data on such factors as education, regional and occupational mobility, income, and consumption show that, in the last ten to fifteen years, Hungarian society increasingly has been divided into two segments: those who have been able to counteract the deepening economic crisis by intensifying their activities in the second economy and by redistributing resources within the family and those who have not. Data on poverty (presented below) show that urban families with several children are overrepresented in the latter group. The substantial number of mothers bringing up children alone face exceptionally high risks of poverty; the loss of a marriage also means the loss of potential for overcoming economic hardship through extended work in the second economy. One-parent families (mainly female-headed) are consequently overrepresented among the poor.<sup>5</sup> The resulting feminization of poverty in Hungary has been recently extended by severe cuts in social spending on child-related benefits.

The consequences of poverty are serious for all members of poor families, especially children. Nevertheless, I would like to point to the burdens that poverty puts on women.<sup>6</sup> Although many women have quite substantial schooling (completed secondary education has become a rule among young urban women), they are increasingly forced—because of a variety of social and economic trends I will review shortly—to accept the lowest-level jobs in industry or low-paid work in services and administration. At the same time, they also face a substantial threat of unem-

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed analysis of the phenomenon, see Zsuzsa Ferge, "Income Distribution-Poverty-Social Policy," in *Social Policy Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Zsuzsa Ferge and György Varnai (Budapest: Kossuth, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Zsuzsa Ferge, *A Society in the Making* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979); and Julia Szalai, "Poverty in Hungary in the Decade of Economic Crisis, 1978-1987" (Budapest, 1989, typescript).

ployment, since most of the jobs they occupy may turn out to be superfluous from one day to the next. These conditions—high education, low-level jobs, poor pay, and the threat of unemployment—increase women's vulnerability and have serious consequences for everyday aspects of their lives such as acquiring child care. While the development of a market economy in Hungarian society may have favorable aspects in the long run, one should not deny the negative significance, especially for women, of the increasing class differences that will result. Indeed, as the significance of merit and achievement decreases and the importance of family position and informal support grows, the diverging life-perspectives of women with similar educational but different family backgrounds could produce Third World-like social disintegration and an eventual demand for corrective and protective social intervention. Although it is not my task in this essay to outline the policies required to counteract these possibilities, I wish at least to draw attention to the urgent need for them.

To demonstrate my claims in more detail, I will present a general account of trends in employment, education, the second economy, and the processes of economic transition, focusing mainly on their gender-related aspects. Additionally, I will outline significant modifications in the patterns and forms of child care. Although I will try to demonstrate that the markedly changed role, status, and value of the child in Hungarian families have constituted perhaps the most important indicator of the successful modernization of Hungarian society over the last few decades, I will also underline the growing inequalities that child care responsibilities have introduced among women amid the same circumstances.

### **Changing patterns of women's and men's employment in the last decades—a brief overview**

Full employment based almost exclusively on full-time work in the state-regulated spheres of the economy has for a long time been regarded as a central characteristic of socialist societies. True, comparisons of the planned, state-regulated command economies with Western economies ruled by market relationships showed marked differences in many important features of the labor force, of the regulation and motivation of economic performances, and of employment patterns. Given the scope of this article, I cannot discuss all the historical, political, social, and economic determinants of those significant differences.<sup>7</sup> Instead, I will con-

<sup>7</sup> I have analyzed those factors in more detail in two recent writings; see Julia Szalai, "Early Exit from Employment in Hungary," in *Time for Retirement*, ed. Martin Kohli and Martin Rein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press), and "Child Poverty

TABLE 1 THE EXTENSION OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT, 1949-90 (Rate of Full-time Employees by Age and Sex; Percentages)

Age (Years)	Men					Women				
	1949	1960	1970	1980	1990	1949	1960	1970	1980	1990
14-19	64	51	38	39	28	53	43	42	34	26
20-24	93	95	92	93	86	45	55	66	60	59
25-29	97	99	99	98	94	34	49	65	70	62
30-39	98	99	98	98	94	30	50	70	83	81
40-49	97	98	96	94	91	27	51	67	80	85
50-54	94	97	92	86	81	25	46	57	67	67
55-59	89	93	84	72	61	27	31	29	19	6
60-X	69	62	26	6	2	22	23	9	4	1

Source: *Census 1990* (Budapest: CSO, 1991).

Note: The rate of part-time employment in socialist Hungary has been negligible among active earners. Part-time employment has been permitted as an additional source of income in cases of pensioners, but those included over sixty years of age are all full-time employees. The employment of those on the child care grant in a given year is not included in the table either, since they are officially registered among inactive earners.

centrate on some of the consequences that the socialist organization of work has had on the lives of men and women. The patterns of participation of the two sexes in both formal employment and in the activities of the second economy seem to be changing rapidly and dramatically. Those changes have to be analyzed in relation to the past as much as to the present; such an approach might help us to better understand the character of the challenges that people face in adapting quickly to the transition toward a market economy based on entirely new rules and relationships.

As shown in table 1, the rapid extension of employment in the last decades has been based mainly on the increasing involvement of women. The new industrial policy of the socialist economy planned for a massive amount of semiskilled and unskilled labor by former agricultural workers and by homemakers who had worked hard in and around their peasant households but had not been previously employed in the sense of working for wages.<sup>8</sup> Thus the employment rate of women ages fifteen to

and Deprivation in Industrialized Countries: The Hungarian Case" (Budapest, 1991, typescript).

<sup>8</sup> Employment could not be expanded further among men because after absorbing the unemployed "reserve army" of the mid-1940s, the employment rate of men ages fifteen to fifty-nine (i.e., between leaving primary education and retirement age) was already 91 percent in 1949.

fifty-four (i.e., between the age of compulsory education and that of retirement) rose from 35 percent in 1949 to 74 percent in 1984, with a modest decline to 72 percent in 1990. The increase was sharpest between 1950 and 1970; while the number of women in that age bracket was practically identical in those two years (it was just 3 percent higher in 1970 than in 1949), the number of those who were employed grew by 90 percent.

In the last decades, women provided the great bulk of investment-saving semiskilled and unskilled labor: their proportion in this segment of the labor force doubled from 27 percent in 1949 to 54 percent in 1984. Although the female labor force made up 51 percent of semiskilled and unskilled blue-collar workers in 1970 and 44 percent in 1980, such jobs represented only 46 percent of all wage economy jobs in 1970 and 38 percent in 1980. The trend has continued in the last decade: while unskilled and semiskilled jobs dropped to 31 percent of total available jobs by 1990, the number of women holding such jobs did not decrease proportionately; even now, as high as 37 percent of women in the work force are unskilled and semiskilled workers. In other words, despite their rising level of education (see below), women were and are heavily over-represented in the least skilled segments of the labor market.

The continuing expansion of employment in the wage sector of the Hungarian economy has been accompanied by a permanent rise in the level of schooling of the labor force (see table 2).<sup>9</sup> The proportion of women having completed at least secondary education rose from 20 to 38 percent between 1970 and the mid-eighties, increasingly exceeding the respective percentages of men (18–30 percent). Women have exhibited an orientation toward less vocational, more academic forms of secondary education; thus they have lagged behind men with regard to participation in specialized training for practical skills and trades. Although the percentage of women with qualifications for skilled work rose from 4 to 12 percent, between 1970 and 1984 the rate at which men completed day courses in vocational training schools rose from 10 to 28 percent over the same period.

<sup>9</sup> The permanent increase in educational attainment (including not only the regular education of children and adolescents, but a vast expansion of evening and correspondence courses) was largely dictated by the drive of the regime to modernize the economy; the massive and forced industrialization required relatively high standards of knowledge that had not been taught previously, given the dominance of traditional agricultural production. The political goal of establishing the new professional class, however, was also a significant factor in the process. At the same time, the growing importance of knowledge as a means of social mobility also turned people's aspiration toward schooling. As an outcome of all these factors, the completion of one or another forms of secondary education has become a general norm since the mid-sixties.

TABLE 2 CHANGING LEVEL OF SCHOOLING OF THE EMPLOYED POPULATION BY SEX, 1970-84 (Percentage Ratios)

	1970		1980		1984	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Unfinished primary education	41	37	18	19	11	10
Completed eighth grade of primary school	31	39	32	40	31	40
Vocational training (after primary school)	10	4	23	9	28	12
Completed secondary school (comprehensive or technical)	12	16	18	25	20	29
Completed higher education	6	4	9	7	10	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *Microcensus*, 1984 (Budapest: CSO, 1985).

The result of these patterns is the prevailing dominance of men in well-paid, more mobile jobs in all industries, whereas women (even with broader, though less job-oriented education) are increasingly caught in the lower-paid, more monotonous blue- and white-collar jobs. Thus dissatisfaction with their work, permanent feelings of subordination, and apathy toward the unlikely possibility of promotion are quite general experiences of working women, strengthened and reinforced by women's markedly decreasing chances for occupational mobility. Although rates of occupational mobility show a general decrease since the mid-seventies, the decrease has not been even between women and men: comparative data from the last country-wide representative mobility survey indicate that the chances for promotion have decreased more for women than for men in the same age groups, although they are greater for the older than the younger cohorts.<sup>10</sup>

Women's status in the labor force is indicated also by significant differences in male and female monthly earnings in all industries. Although the aggregate measures of average male/female earnings obscure the differences in the composition of the labor force by qualifications and hide the fact that women tend to work less in overtime beyond compulsory working hours, the markedly lower rates of pay underline the role of sexism as one of the decisive determinants of personal income. One of the ironies of the socialist economy, which can be seen in table 3, is that better-educated white-collar women tend to have relatively lower incomes than blue-collar men. The enforced participation of women in employment dictated by the norms of the centrally planned organization of production, accompanied by rigid working hours, frequent shift work, hard working conditions, and frequent

<sup>10</sup> See *Social Mobility and Prestige* (Budapest: CSO, 1986).



TABLE 3 WOMEN'S AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES IN THE NONPRIVATE SPHERES OF THE ECONOMY AS PERCENTAGES OF THOSE OF MEN IN 1989

	Blue-collar women	White-collar women
Industry	64.5	52.1
Construction	65.2	55.6
Agriculture	67.7	54.8
Transportation	69.5	56.7
Trading	76.2	66.8
Services	75.8	64.2

Source: *Employment and Earnings*, 1989 (Budapest: CSO, 1990).

Note: Men's average monthly wages = 100.

health hazards, has not led to women's full emancipation, a once-expected socialist ideal.

In addition to the many humiliating aspects of their work, women often feel guilty about their involuntary neglect of their roles as mothers and wives. In a recent study of the sociological determinants and consequences of women's high and increasing rate of mental disorders, we found a massive incidence of serious neurosis among working women. (The incidence was as high as 37 percent in the most active cohort of those between the ages of thirty and fifty-nine.) When women were asked about the matters they found most difficult in their everyday lives, 51 percent of women ages thirty to thirty-nine complained about their failures as mothers; 46 percent found their work load too much; 32 percent mentioned other problems related to their workplaces. Women's most frequent complaint was that it was too burdensome to coordinate the requirements of their different roles as employees, mothers, and spouses.<sup>11</sup> Thus the desire for a more flexible combination of employment (which most women definitely want to maintain) with the satisfactory accomplishment of their ordinary household tasks has been articulated repeatedly by women from the early 1960s onward in all public forums—in workplaces, in local party organizations, and in the press.

In the mid-sixties, the limitations of a poorly functioning shortage economy, accompanied by a significant liberalization of the economic and employment policy of the Communist party, led to the unexpected expansion of family-based small household economies. Ever since, time-budget surveys and other studies of the economic contribution of that informal sector of production indicate a continuous increase in the rates

<sup>11</sup> Three items could be listed; therefore the sum could be over 100 percent; see Julia Szalai and Ágnes Vajda, "On the Border of Social and Health Care Deliveries," in *Publications of the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences* (Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1988).

of participation and in the time devoted to various activities in those small businesses.<sup>12</sup> The impact of the second economy is greatest in agriculture and construction. For instance, between 1960 and 1980, 900,000 houses or flats were built exclusively on the private resources of money, time, and physical labor of Hungarian families and on the traditional work exchange in the neighborhood, as opposed to only 600,000 flats built by official state firms in the same period. The significance of the second economy has also increased in modern and urbanized services such as repair work, catering, typing, child care, and care for the sick.

As already mentioned, the typical female and male jobs of the second economy tend to follow traditional patterns of division of labor between the sexes. However, a quite significant shift can be seen in the direction of men performing traditionally female tasks (more so in relation to children than to housework) and vice versa (women are found especially in construction and even more in management). Perhaps more important than the content, the meaning of the traditional family model has changed significantly. People see their work in the second economy as reflecting their own choices (as opposed to the alienating and uncontrollable demands of their jobs in the formal economy), and they have been able to raise the standards of their living conditions much above the ones experienced in state-run institutions increasingly run down by the chronic lack of investments. As a consequence, people's work within the family has become a source of pride and self-respect. On top of that, the skills that people have gradually acquired in the informal sector have turned out to be very useful in their adaptation to the new regulations of the official market. The second economy has come to symbolize autonomy, cooperation, and success, and men and women share their efforts within it.

The threat that women's extensive participation in the household economy might lead to a conservative turn against their relative independence seems to be exaggerated. Recent trends in women's labor force participation indicate an opposite development. According to the census data of 1990, women's unemployment rates are lower in all age groups than those of men.<sup>13</sup> The reason cannot be that there is a higher demand for women's unskilled labor than for the skills of men, or that the pro-

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., "Economizing with Time and Labor Activities," in *Data of the Time Budget Survey of 1986/87* (Budapest: CSO, 1989); "Changes in the Way of Life of the Hungarian Society," in *On the Data-Base of the Time Budget Surveys of 1976/77 and 1986/87* (Budapest: CSO, 1990); *Social Stratification, Living Conditions and Ways of Life* (Budapest: CSO, 1983).

<sup>13</sup> A recent study of the level of qualification found the same phenomenon: the risk of unemployment is lower even among unqualified women workers than among their male counterparts; see Ágnes Hárs-Gyula Nagy, *Some Notes about the Trends and Composition of Unemployment at the Light of the Statistical Data* (Budapest: Publications of the Institute of Labour, 1990).

ductivity of firms employing mostly women is higher than those employing mostly men. The explanation (as further research will have to prove) might be women's greater adaptability. Because the decomposition movement toward privatization of the state-run firms is accompanied by the rapid multiplication of small private businesses in the service sector, women might be inclined to find additional part-time work there. Given that women's lower salaries can be replaced by an increase in their work in the household economy, the economic disadvantage to the family might be quite small. That option is less open for men. Because men are seen as the main wage earners and because they regard themselves as useful only if they have gainful work in the classic sense of the term, they can much less afford such flexibility.

The new privatized businesses, though usually open to better-educated, more qualified women, also make use of women's former informal market experiences. A recent study of the social characteristics of the new small enterprises found that 32 percent of the owners, managers, and members of those businesses were women. Their participation rates exceed the average in trading and in the new small cooperatives (65 and 43 percent, respectively). The analysis of the data pointed out that many women (as well as their male partners) have good schooling and work qualifications. In addition, the previous market experience women gained in their household economies or in other private/semi-private spheres of production turned out to be the most decisive reason for their entrepreneurial choice, regarded as even more important than the available capital "that one can get somehow."<sup>14</sup>

All in all, the new circumstances of the transition inform us about women's relative flexibility and adaptability. One should be very cautious, however, in the conclusions drawn from this early data, as the most significant changes of property relations are still ahead of us. Increased unemployment and pressures for women to go into part-time work not of their choosing could well occur within a short time. Therefore, continuous follow-up and balanced evaluation of these processes will be the most important tasks for social scientists in the future.

### Changes in the patterns of child care

As already stated, the rapid expansion of the labor force in the Hungarian socialist economy from the late 1940s onward was based first on young women, many of whom were mothers of children in need of regular day care.<sup>15</sup> As parents (and even grandparents) had to spend eight hours a day

<sup>14</sup> See Ágnes Vajda-Tibor Kuczi, *The Social Composition of the New Small Entrepreneurs* (Budapest: Institute of Economy, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> The share of twenty- to forty-year-old employed women in the labor force has been increasing steadily during the last four decades. They made up 8 percent of the to-

at their workplaces, as well as an additional two to three hours of commuting to and from work, their children's lives had to change. The delivery of private child care services had been rapidly disappearing, partly for political and ideological reasons but mainly for financial ones—the lack of resources at families' disposal. The solution had to be the rapid expansion of the networks of state-run nurseries and kindergartens (see table 4).

The development of public child care facilities was driven above all by the employment needs of forced industrialization. Children's needs were painfully subordinated to the political priorities of economic goals. For this reason the quantitative data on extended public care for children in the socialist societies (cited frequently to demonstrate the "supremacy of socialism") do not in fact represent a meaningful improvement of the everyday living conditions of their users, especially the very young. The creation of great numbers of nurseries and kindergartens (and, later, preschools) followed a logic of minimal service that did not meet the children's needs for attention and personal care, or even for space and physical equipment. The high growth rate of child care facilities was motivated by the organizational requirements of the system of production, based on directives and administrative regulations of central agencies. Thus, the rapid boom in child care units in the 1950s and 1960s was not produced by purposeful investments guided by careful planning; in fact, the rate of new investments in infrastructure was never as low as at that period, since all capital was swept into the forced industrialization of the country. Instead, overuse as a general rule was introduced: the increase in the number of child care units was regularly exceeded by the number of places in them, the latter exceeded even more by the yearly number of registered children. These developments were, indeed, not contrary to the achievement-oriented norms of an administration that measured its performance by quantitative measures of annual growth rates.

The outcome was obvious: a steady decrease in space per child, an increase in the size of the group under the supervision of one adult (often and increasingly unqualified), and an intensification of overcrowding and physical deterioration of facilities. All of these dehumanizing aspects of mass child care were worsened by rigid timetables, inflexible and work-dictated hours, lack of facilities, and, needless to say, lack of personal care and individual attention. As a consequence, hospitalization, worsening emotional and intellectual performances, frequent epidemics, and early signs of neurosis among children were acknowledged by parents, health nurses, pediatricians, and preschool teachers, reinforcing the feelings of guilt among young parents. The backwardness and poor quality of available child care services became a source of conflict in the later

---

tal employed population in 1949, 12 percent in 1960, 15 percent in 1970, 18 percent in 1980, and 19 percent in 1984.

TABLE 4 TRENDS IN THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE, 1951-89  
 A. TRENDS IN THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE: NURSERIES, 1951-89

Year	Nurseries		Places in Nurseries		Children in Nurseries		Ratio of Children per 100 Places (Ratio of Crowdedness)	Number of Children Attending Nurseries as Percentage of Population Ages 0-3
	Number of Units	Rate of Growth*	Number of Units	Rate of Growth*	Number of Units	Rate of Growth*		
1951	256	100	8,433	100	7,268	100	86	1.1
1955	683	267	25,243	299	23,466	323	93	3.2
1960	816	319	29,436	349	31,970	440	109	5.4
1965	952	372	35,184	417	40,864	562	116	8.1
1970	1,044	408	40,010	474	41,771	575	104	7.4
1975	1,132	442	49,986	593	55,371	762	111	8.3
1980	1,305	510	64,502	765	69,768	960	108	10.1
1985	1,293	505	68,274	810	53,970	743	79	12.3
1988	1,146	448	60,312	715	44,362	610	74	8.9
1989	1,096	428	56,460	670	42,870	590	76	8.6

B. TRENDS IN THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE: KINDERGARTENS/PRESCHOOLS, 1952-89

Year	Kindergartens/Preschools		Places in Kindergartens/Preschools		Children in Kindergartens/Preschools		Number of Children per 100 Places (Ratio of Crowdedness)	Ratio of Children Attending Kindergartens/Preschools, as a Percentage of the Population Ages 3-6
	Number of Units	Rate of Growth†	Number of Units	Rate of Growth†	Number of Units	Rate of Growth†		
1952	2,072	100	99,398	100	130,056	100	131	26.0
1955	2,503	121	129,344	130	145,948	112	113	28.0
1960	2,865	138	162,282	163	183,766	141	113	33.7
1965	3,227	156	185,768	187	189,372	146	102	47.1
1970	3,457	167	208,647	210	227,279	175	109	51.1
1975	4,077	197	295,722	298	329,408	253	111	68.0
1980	4,690	226	385,533	388	478,100	368	124	77.9
1985	4,823	233	413,803	416	424,678	327	103	87.2
1988	4,772	230	402,424	405	393,735	303	98	86.0
1989	4,748	229	390,871	393	392,273	302	100	85.7

Source: A, *Situation in Health Care, 1983* (Budapest: CSO, 1985); *Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 1988* (Budapest, 1989); *Statistical Yearbook, 1989* (Budapest: CSO, 1990). B, Ministry of Culture, *Statistical Reports 1980, 1989* (Budapest, 1981, 1990).

\*1951 = 100.

†1952 = 100.

period of the 1960s and 1970s, especially when regulation and quality could not keep pace with the improved living standards, heightened aspirations, and modernized values of families, who within their private-households were able to realize much better living conditions. Thus the

demand for more suitable solutions for the care of at least the very young has become widespread among young families. Because it coincided with other important economic and political pursuits of the regime, the outcome was probably the most significant innovation of the 1960s, namely, the deliberate expansion of choices for care of children up to age three by the child care grant, passed in 1966 and put into effect in 1967. The history of this new benefit deserves some comment; besides its favorable impact on the lives of young families and on the psychological and physical development of children, it also symbolized the attempts at compromise among the political, economic, and ideological principles of the regime and the resistant behavior of the great bulk of the society.

In 1966, the Politburo of the Communist party introduced a job-protected flat-rate grant that helped women to stay at home after the five months of paid maternity leave until their child was thirty months of age (provided that the women had been in full-time employment for at least one preceding year).<sup>16</sup> A number of factors explain the development of this policy. The most important considerations were the worsening production of the socialist firms in the second half of the sixties, a fear of unemployment that resulted from a liberalization of economic management, unfavorable oscillations in the size of the labor force due to the forced population policy of the fifties,<sup>17</sup> and the chronic scarcity of resources for keeping pace with the increased demands for institutional child care.<sup>18</sup>

Other social factors also played some role, however; the unfavorable health and psychological indicators of children in long-term institutional care from a very early age stimulated many pediatricians to enter the

<sup>16</sup> In 1969, the maximum duration was extended to the child's age of three. Later modifications eased the former strict regulations that prohibited formal employment during the period of the grant: part-time employment was permitted, and the young mother could terminate payment of the grant once a year without losing the opportunity to go back on grant at a later point within those three years. Job protection was meant seriously: if a woman wanted to go back to work, her job had to be ensured, or a similar one for a similar wage had to be offered. Later the entitlement was extended to the father, too, although males taking the grant remained exceptional.

<sup>17</sup> The forced population policy of the early 1950s prohibited abortions and tried to stimulate the increase in the number of births by all available means, due to both economic and military considerations. Thus the size of cohort born between 1953 and 1955, when free abortions were no longer permitted, was some 20,000–30,000 higher. When that population peak left the primary schools around 1967–69, the secondary schools were unable to accommodate them. Withdrawing young mothers from the labor force temporarily helped to mitigate the tensions.

<sup>18</sup> The overcrowding of the nurseries did not diminish. On the contrary, it steadily increased. The capacity was especially inadequate to meet the higher demands that result from the greater number of births in the late sixties. At the same time, the continued priorities of the economic policy that swept all available resources into further industrialization was an insurmountable obstacle to significant investment in the child care infrastructure. At the time of its introduction, the child care grant was a much cheaper solution for meeting the increased demands: the yearly cost per child was about one-third of the additional costs of constructing and equipping public nurseries.

newly liberalized public discourse with strong arguments for helping mothers to stay at home for the first three years of their children's lives. Those arguments surprisingly were supported by a number of economists and planners, who referred to the unstable employment rates for women, especially in industries that relied heavily on their labor. Studies of the labor force participation of women with young children in the formal, socialist economy since 1963 continuously showed that young mothers with children up to the age of two spent 30–40 percent of their total work time either on sick leave because of the child's sickness or on unpaid leave. At the same time, firms could not plan for their absences, which produced frequent disruptions in production. (Because the possibility of further expansion of the labor force to those previously nonemployed had gradually been exhausted by that time, firms were encouraged to make do with available labor.) The child care grant seemed to offer some solution and was welcomed by a number of different social groups.

Table 5, A, B, shows that the grant became very popular within a few years and that more than four-fifths of the eligible young mothers took advantage of it by 1973. As a consequence, the overcrowded conditions of the nurseries were somewhat eased. Hospitalization and psychological problems were much reduced as well, as the majority of women did not go back to work in the first eighteen months of their babies' lives. The favorable consequences of these new policies for child development were later demonstrated by several studies; surveys among children in preschools found that the creativity, sociability, and intellectual performance of children attending preschool after three years spent in individual care at home (i.e., mainly with their mothers on child care grant) were significantly better in all social groups than the relevant measures of children put in institutional care at an early stage of their life.

In addition to its many favorable aspects, however, the child care grant has created social tensions, too; most significantly, it has contributed to a marked increase in social inequality among families with children. A continuous widening of the social distance between the living conditions and future perspectives of women belonging to different social strata could be seen, as the use of the child care grant was greatly influenced by both professional and financial considerations. Women who were less-educated and who had fewer job qualifications tended to use the grant at a higher percentage and for a longer period (often extended as much as five to eight years by subsequent childbirths) (see table 5, B, C). Those trends increased income inequalities among young families and contributed to both the relative impoverishment of large numbers of women bringing up small children and to the reduction in the occupational promotion of young women.

The child care grant has lost much of its desirability, however, even among women with fewer job qualifications. Since its monthly value did

TABLE 5 SOME DATA ON USE OF THE CHILD CARE GRANT/FEE, 1967-87  
 A. USE OF THE CHILD CARE GRANT/FEE, AS A PERCENTAGE OF THOSE ELIGIBLE

1967	1970	1973	1979	1986
75.6	76.6	81.8	83.1	88.9

B. USE OF THE CHILD CARE GRANT/FEE, BY LEVEL OF SCHOOLING (Percentage of Those Eligible)

	Primary School	Vocational Training	Secondary School	Higher Education	Average
1967	84.3	88.5	83.0	68.7	83.2
1986	88.6	89.2	88.8	81.8	88.9

C. DISTRIBUTION OF THE TERMINATED CHILD CARE GRANTS/FEEs, ACCORDING TO THE DURATION OF USE (USE OF CHILD CARE GRANT AND FEE TOGETHER)

Duration of Use (in Months)	Termination of Use between April 1979 and March 1980			Termination of Use between April 1986 and March 1987		
	Blue Collar	White Collar	Together	Blue Collar	White Collar	Together
0-6	5.5	12.1	8.0	3.5	5.8	4.4
7-12	10.0	17.4	12.9	5.5	8.7	6.9
13-18	10.5	14.7	12.1	9.6	15.8	11.8
19-24	11.4	13.5	12.3	9.0	11.3	9.8
25-30	14.2	14.5	14.3	12.4	15.6	13.4
31-	48.4	27.8	40.3	60.0	42.8	53.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: *Take-up of the Child Care Grant and Its Impacts (1967-1980)* (Budapest: CSO, 1981); and *Take-up of the Child Care Fee and Its Impacts* (Budapest: CSO, 1988).

not follow rapidly increasing consumer prices after 1978, the rate of grant usage dropped in the first half of the 1980s, thus again putting extra demands on nurseries. The increasing numbers of refused applications for admission (usually those of children coming from a more disadvantaged social background) have generated social and occupational tensions, especially given the increasing threat of losing one's job. The fear of becoming unemployed has led even women not well qualified for employment to go back to work as soon as possible after childbirth.

In 1985, the introduction of an earnings-related version of the former child care grant in 1985 (called the child care fee)<sup>19</sup> helped to ease the complex constraints in ways similar to the impact of the grant at its

<sup>19</sup> Regulations on the child care fee are as follows: after six months of fully paid maternity leave, mothers can stay at home getting 75 percent of their previous average earning until the child is two years old. (The flat-rate type child care grant can be taken up for the third year, if they wish.) The child care fee is a parental right for fathers for the second and third year. Nevertheless, in the great majority of cases it is the mother who remains at home for the second year, too.



beginning: it lessened the sharpening tensions on the labor market, contributed to a welcome increase in the birth rate in the second half of the 1980s, and moderated the heated (and insatiable) demands for public child care facilities.

Table 6 gives a general overview of the developments in the modes of caring for children under the age of fifteen as of 1984 (the latest information available). These data demonstrate the compromises between the requirements of employment and the socially desirable norms of child care. Most children from birth to age three are brought up at home (nearly exclusively by their mothers); only one-fourth of them are in nurseries. Institutional forms of care become predominant at the next stage of life: 78 percent of the four- to six-year-olds are in preschools, while 22 percent of them remain at home either with their mothers or another adult member of the extended family. Two-thirds of young

Table 6 DISTRIBUTION OF FORMS OF DAILY CARE FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 15, ACCORDING TO THE AGE OF THE CHILD (%), 1984

Caregiver	Age of Child (in Years)			
	0-3	4-6	7-10	11-14
The mother, who:				
Is on maternity leave/child care grant	62.2	8.0	3.1	1.4
Works at home	1.7	2.9	4.6	4.5
Is a housewife	6.8	5.6	6.7	7.1
Works permanently on the night shift	.1	.1	.2	2.7
Finds other ways of combining gainful work with child care	.6	.8	2.2	2.7
Total	71.4	17.4	16.8	18.4
Not the mother, but:				
Institutional service of nurseries/preschools/ day-care centers at schools	24.9	77.9	65.7	38.1
Grandparents	2.9	3.5	6.8	7.4
Father	.1	.2	.6	.9
Sibling or other relative	.2	.4	2.1	2.3
Paid help at home	.4	.2	.2	.2
Other forms	.2	.4	1.3	4.9
Nobody; the child is regularly alone while parents work	...	...	6.5	30.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculated from data in the *Microcensus of 1984* (Budapest: CSO, 1985).

schoolchildren (seven to ten years old) are in day care centers at schools, although the ratio drops to 38 percent in case of the children ages eleven to fourteen. The contribution of grandparents (who are possibly retired by the time their grandchildren are reaching school age) is not negligible: 7 percent of schoolchildren ages seven to ten are cared for by them, while the care offered by the mothers remains a constant 16 percent. It should be noted that nearly one-third of the eleven- to fourteen-year-olds spend their days without any care during the week.

### **Implications for Hungarian women and families**

Although there has been an erosion and gradual modification of Hungarian socialism over the last twenty or twenty-five years, the most characteristic features of the period are general improvement of living conditions, significant modernization of the way of life, and a gradual liberalization of classical socialist rule. Nevertheless, these favorable trends hide two important and partially interrelated phenomena: namely, the steady increase in social inequality within the general trend of improvement, and a widening of the gap between the people's sense of control in the public and private spheres of their lives. The Janus-faced character of Kádárism in combining the maintenance of the formal structures of power, organization, and control from above with the tacit acceptance of oppositional social behavior from below in the form of a second economy based on private family labor has led to an overt crisis of the system as a whole. This crisis has manifested itself in decreasing economic performance, growing symptoms of social disintegration, and increasing dysfunction within important institutional networks such as social security, health care, and education. The consequences have been rapidly increasing poverty, worsening health standards, growing unemployment, high inflation, and, in general, a rapid increase in social inequality between those who can and those who cannot cope with the move toward a market economy in Hungary.

Recent findings on the composition of poverty and on changes in the characteristics of both the population in the lowest decile and below the subsistence minimum show a marked shift toward the overrepresentation of young urban families with children. The decreasing real value of the child care grant is a major contributor to that fact: women on grant at home are more than twice as numerous among the poorest than the overall population. Increasing poverty among young urban families challenges the social policy of the last two decades. Political pressure has been withdrawn both from provision of public services (including schools, day-care facilities, and meals for children) and from the modernization (even preservation) of an adequate social security that could cope with the

individual and social constraints of poverty. Instead, it has focused increasingly on patching holes here and there and providing haphazard emergency help.

Notably, not only the risks of poverty but also the chances for affluence have increased among families with young children. (This tendency was especially pronounced between 1977 and 1987.)<sup>20</sup> For this reason, the increase in the inequality among families with small children was more dramatic than in any other group of the population. This phenomenon draws our attention to the consequences of the recent developments discussed in this article. With the erosion of redistributive social policy amid the emergence of more accentuated market forces, the well-being or extreme poverty of families is almost exclusively determined by the capacities of the private sector: young families with well-off grandparents get significant help through informal redistribution within the extended kinship, whereas those without such a background are practically lost. Because these tendencies do not seem to be temporary, they might have serious long-term consequences for social disintegration; class differences among women might turn into caste differences, opening up the life chances of the more fortunate while locking the least supported, poorest mothers into lasting poverty. Beside this unjust inequality between classes of women, children are also endangered by the long-term reproduction of the unequal circumstances in which they are born. There is an urgent need for social protection. Otherwise, Hungary may face a future of serious and uncontrollable social conflict and the loss of the fragile social integration created by the collective efforts of the last decades.

*Institute of Sociology  
Hungarian Academy of Sciences*

<sup>20</sup> *Income Surveys* (Budapest: CSO, 1977, 1987).

## Memories of Resistance: Women Activists from the Spanish Civil War

*Shirley Mangini*

OF THE THOUSANDS of articles and books about the Spanish civil war, few contain information about women's role in the war and its aftermath, except for brief descriptions or scant references in footnotes. Yet the Second Republic (1931–36) was a period of great change for Spanish women, a flash of freedom from the oppression of the past and from the encroaching darkness of Franco's post-civil war regime. In fact, the most revolutionary opportunity for the emergence of women on the intellectual and political scenes took place at that time. In 1931, for the second time in Spanish history (the period of 1868–75 was the first)<sup>1</sup> a democratic government was established and a number of women were elected to parliament. For a brief time women were a vital part of this democratic process: the anarchist thinker Federica Montseny was elected to a ministerial post; Victoria Kent, one of the female members of parliament, was made director general of Spanish prisons; a few women writers and activists, like María Teresa León, María Martínez Sierra, the feminist Marfa del Maeztu, and the Communist organizer Dolores Ibárruri, achieved literary and political fame.

Women's concerns were becoming visible for the first time in Spain. Divorce was legalized, along with abortion, giving women much more control over their lives than they had had in the past. A women's suffrage law was passed in 1931, thanks to the courageous lobbying of the feminist Clara Campoamor. Women were awakening to the possibility that

<sup>1</sup>The year 1868 marks the September Revolution. Inspired by a group of liberal intellectuals, the movement produced substantial social changes for women.

they were not inferior to men and that education offered them the opportunity to achieve equality.

In 1936 the military rose up against the legitimately established government and initiated a bloody civil war that lasted nearly three years. Perhaps women's participation in the social improvements of the republic prepared them for the next three years. Women literally poured into the streets to aid the republican cause against the military insurrection. Some went to the front lines to fight; other well-known women—especially the congresswomen Margarita Nelken and Dolores Ibárruri and the minister of health Montseny—ceaselessly spoke at meetings and rallies to cheer the soldiers to victory. Many worked at organizing and distributing food and supplies at the front lines; thousands replaced men in the factories in order to keep the country running. Women founded and directed numerous political organizations and became a force to be reckoned with during the war. According to the Communist activist and writer Teresa Pámies, “that revolutionary explosion” provided “absolute freedom” for the female population during the war years.<sup>2</sup>

But in 1939 the republican cause was lost. Some women managed to escape to freedom—the majority to France, where they were herded into immense refugee camps, only to encounter disease, filth, and starvation. The most unlucky were imprisoned or assassinated. Women who escaped punishment were sent back to their homes. The regressive fascist government policies of the victorious included the outlawing of abortion and divorce. Families were honored and rewarded for having as many children as possible, an effective way to keep women at home. Women's legal rights were taken away. Women were to pay dearly for their brief experience of freedom.

Information about the lives of women during the war is becoming more accessible, as several books by women have come out since Franco's death in 1975. Autobiographical works published during and after the Franco regime help to clarify what women were doing and thinking during those tragic years. Coming from a country with little tradition of female autobiography, these works exhibit many characteristics that distinguish women's autobiographies from men's. As Estelle Jelinek has indicated in *Women's Autobiography*, women emphasize personal relationships rather than political or historical connections.<sup>3</sup> In addition, these works are not traditional first-person narratives; so Spanish women, who lived in the shadow of men for centuries and were oriented

<sup>2</sup> “The Spanish Civil War,” pt. 5, August 6, 1985, Granada Television Productions, John E. Allen, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> Estelle C. Jelinek, *Women's Autobiography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

toward helping and sharing, evidently did not see themselves as main characters in their own life stories. Most of the autobiographies analyzed here give accounts of many other people, utilizing what I have called "the urgent solitary voice of collective testimony."<sup>4</sup>

We find these unique qualities to different degrees in nearly all the works written by women about this period. The fictionalized autobiography of Juana Doña, *Desde la noche y la niebla* (From the night and the mist), which primarily deals with her prison life after the war, is a clear example of the "urgent solitary voice of collective testimony," as is Angeles García Madrid's *Requiem por la libertad* (Requiem for freedom). The writer María Teresa León, in her more poetic than political *Memoria de la melancolía* (Memoirs of melancholy), does not consistently use the traditional first-person singular narrative but rather oscillates between singular and plural testimony, providing us with a "duobiography" that reflects her relationship with her companion, the poet Rafael Alberti. She too decries the fate of exiled Spaniards in a collective fashion, while she describes her and Alberti's odyssey through France, Argentina, and Italy. Member of parliament Victoria Kent philosophizes in a coldly analytical fashion about war and destruction in her autobiographical novel, *Cuatro años en París, 1940-1944* (Four years in Paris, 1940-44). *They Shall Not Pass*, the memoir of one of the most notable political figures of the twentieth century, Dolores Ibárruri, known worldwide as "La Pasionaria," is both a history and an apologia. Ibárruri attempts to vindicate herself before the public and to justify the acts of the Communist party during the war, but she also describes the destiny and plight of other Spaniards, especially women. Constanza de la Mora, a press censor during the war and a Communist activist, also clearly sees herself as the protagonist of her autobiography, *In Place of Splendor*.<sup>5</sup> Though she is less conscious of the notion of collectivity than other writers, de la Mora emphasizes the role of women in Spanish society as she denounces injustices against them and outlines the causes of the civil war. Of all these autobiographers, only León was a writer by profession.

<sup>4</sup> See Shirley Mangini, "Three Voices of Exile," *Monographic Review*, no. 2 (1986), 208-15, and "Spanish Women and the Spanish Civil War: Their Voices and Testimonies," *Rendezvous* 22, no. 2 (1986): 12-16.

<sup>5</sup> Juana Doña, *Desde la noche y la niebla* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1977); Angeles García Madrid, *Requiem por la libertad* (Madrid: Copiasol, 1982); María Teresa León, *Memoria de la melancolía* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S.A., 1970); Victoria Kent, *Cuatro años en París, 1940-1944* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1947); all translations are mine. Also, Dolores Ibárruri, *They Shall Not Pass* (New York: International, 1984); Constanza de la Mora, *In Place of Splendor* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1939).

These are just a few of the memoirs written by women during and after the war.<sup>6</sup> It seems that women's new freedom and their initiation into public life provided them with the necessary preconditions for autobiography. The loss of that freedom and the horrors of war inspired their need to decry Spain's tragedy on paper. Women who had defended the republic suffered a double tragedy at the end of the war: the disappearance of a democracy in which they had invested all their hope and the destruction of the possibility of further social and political advancement.

Some of the authors express no feminist consciousness, though they provide information that permits us to envision their "flash of freedom" and its tragic loss in 1939. This is the underlying theme of most of these books. Yet we must analyze both their expressed intention and the form in which they chose to express it truly to understand their autobiographical works as a body of literature. The common denominator of their expressed intentions is a moral one: to protest the plight of republican Spain primarily from women's perspective. Yet the forms of the works vary markedly, given their different experiences.

### Visible women

In *They Shall Not Pass*, "La Pasionaria" spends the first forty-two pages describing her life of poverty and the exploitation of her people in the Basque mining region where she was raised. While always conscious of her personal story of rebellion against class repression, she writes of the plight of poor Spanish women with succinct bitterness: "Woman's

<sup>6</sup> Other memoirs by women of the left include Sofia Blasco, *Peuple d'Espagne: Journal de guerre de "La Madrecita"* (Paris: N.R.C., 1938); Marisa Bravo, unpublished memoirs (author's personal library); Clara Campoamor, *La révolution espagnole vue par une républicaine* (Paris: Plon, 1937); María Casares, *Residente privilegiada* (Barcelona: Editorial Argos Vergara, 1980); Nieves Castro, *Una vida para un ideal* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1981); Neus Catalá, *De la resistencia a la deportación* (Barcelona: ADGENA, 1984); Tomasa Cuevas, *Cárcel de mujeres, 1939-1945* (Barcelona: Ediciones Sirocco, 1985), *Cárcel de mujeres* (Barcelona: Ediciones Sirocco, 1985), and *Mujeres de la resistencia* (Barcelona: Ediciones Sirocco, 1986); Isabel de Palencia, *I Must Have Liberty* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1940); Matilde de la Torre, *Mares en la sombra* (Paris: Ediciones Iberoamericanas "Norte," 1940); Pilar Fidalgo, *A Young Mother in Franco's Prisons* (London: United Editorial, 1939); Consuelo García, *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* (Madrid: Ediciones Alfaguara, 1982); Angeles Malonda, *Aquello sucedió así* (Madrid: ACOFARMA, 1983); Silvia Mistral, *Exodo (Diario de una refugiada española)* (Mexico: Editorial Minerva, 1941); Federica Montseny, *El exodo, pasión y muerte de españoles en el exilio* (Barcelona: Galba Ediciones, 1977), *Ses años de mi vida (1939-1945)* (Barcelona: Galba Ediciones, 1978), and *Cien días en la vida de una mujer* (Toulouse: Ediciones "Universo," 1949); Mercedes Núñez, *Cárcel de Ventas* (Paris: Editions de la Librairie du Globe, 1967); Carlota O'Neill, *Una mujer en la guerra de España* (Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1979); Teresa Pámic, *Cuando éramos capitanes* (Barcelona: DOPESA, 1976), and *Records de guerra i d'exili* (Barcelona: DOPESA, 1976).

goal, her only aspiration, had to be matrimony and the continuation of the joyless, dismal, pain-ridden thralldom that was our mother's lot; we were supposed to dedicate ourselves wholly to giving birth, to raising our children and to serving our husbands who, for the most part, treated us with complete disregard."<sup>7</sup>

Men did not consider Pasionaria an example of Spanish femininity but rather saw her as an embodiment of "virility," which made them admire and fear her. Even before the onset of the war, Ibárruri had left her miner husband to plunge into politics, thereby escaping the drudgery of her life. She came to political awareness, she says, through consciousness of the need to change Spain's destiny, especially the destiny of poor women. She describes her own rebellion in the face of their apparently hopeless situation: "Was life worth living? My companions in misery and I often asked this question as we discussed our situation, our wretchedness. They spoke with resignation; after all, what could we women do? I rebelled against the idea of the inevitability of such lives as ours; I rebelled against the idea that we were condemned to drag the shackles of poverty and submission through the centuries like beasts of burden—slapped, beaten, ground down by the men chosen to be our life companions."<sup>8</sup>

Ibárruri's voice is more self-righteous than those of the autobiographers who were imprisoned, but it is important to remember that she was one of the major spokespersons for both the Spanish Communist party and women in their condition of double oppression. Though Pasionaria claims that she wrote this book for her grandchildren,<sup>9</sup> its rhetoric is so declamatory in many places as to cast doubt on this assertion. Ibárruri claims to strive for the truth in her work, yet her autobiography is obviously affected by the legend created around her.

Ibárruri wrote *They Shall Not Pass* while living in Moscow as a guest of the Soviet Union, and the book's tone is highly polemical. She clearly speaks for the masses in passages such as the following: "Over a country in chains, over the Spain of prisons, of torture, of summary executions, had come the light of new faith and hope. The light that inspired the epic resistance of our people against perfidious aggression; the light that guides humanity toward the future; the light that radiates from the depths of suffering of a nation and breaks through the thick walls of prisons, saying to all the world with the ringing voice of an immortal people: Spain lives! Spain fights! Spain is!"<sup>10</sup>

In its nonpropagandistic, historical passages, Ibárruri outlines the salient political episodes of the early twentieth century in Spain. Although most of the book is written in the first person, in some passages Ibárruri

<sup>7</sup> Ibárruri, 59.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 60–61.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Ibárruri and her secretary, Irene Falcón, Madrid, February 26, 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Ibárruri, 347.



adopts a tone of intimacy; here is one: "My own life and liberty were all very well but did I have a right to sacrifice my children, depriving them of a secure and warm home, of a mother's care and affection that they needed so much? In my life as a Communist, this has been one of the most painful aspects of the struggle, although I have seldom spoken of it, thinking that the best way to teach is by example, even if I had to shed tears of blood."<sup>11</sup> But even in this rare show of emotion, the author is didactic and self-justifying.

Ibárruri has insisted that she wrote *They Shall Not Pass* without being influenced by others, yet some intervention seems likely.<sup>12</sup> After all, this is the autobiography of one of the Communist party's key organizers of the twentieth century; party information specialists might well have asked to see the manuscript before its publication, which would necessarily influence the style, tone, and thematic material of Ibárruri's text. It is clear that Pasionaria's underlying intention is to justify her actions during the war. Also, that she wrote *They Shall Not Pass* more than twenty-five years after the war's end suggests that the author seeks to "revise" her past in order that her present and future image continue to present her as a political heroine. Dolores Ibárruri projects not only herself but also the identity that the Communist party projected onto her for the world to observe. Her autobiography is invaluable as a document about women and the class struggle in Spain, if we keep in mind that underlying its expressed intention—one of individual "truth," which is akin to the "urgent solitary voice of collective testimony"—is her desire to appear politically correct.

Constanca de la Mora's *In Place of Splendor* is also an apologia, and she too locates her rebellion in the context of her class and the repression she experienced as a woman. Her autobiography, though, is less politically insistent than Ibárruri's. Although de la Mora uses examples from her own life to describe the role of women before and during the civil war, *In Place of Splendor* purports to give a political and historical analysis of Spain that outlines the causes of revolution and war. De la Mora is so conscious of the historical aspect of her autobiography that she includes an index of names and topics at the back of her text. Like Ibárruri, she tells us, "I became a rebel against my heritage,"<sup>13</sup> and when she speaks of the social inequality and the oppression of the Catholic church, especially with regard to women, her tone is also bitterly ironic. Both writers are obsessed with class inequities, though their backgrounds differ, and both speak as women and, to some extent, for women. Both de la Mora and Ibárruri sent their children to Russia to escape the worst

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Ibárruri and her secretary, February 26, 1986.

<sup>13</sup> De la Mora, 10.

dangers of war, and they describe with compassion the plight of other women and children. Both, in their capacity as political organizers, worked to save Spanish children from the ravages of war.

Because de la Mora writes not with the official voice of Soviet communism but rather as a Spanish Communist activist, her work possesses a more intimate tone than Ibárruri's. She describes her first marriage, to a parasitical husband who married her for money and power (she was the granddaughter of the conservative statesman Antonio Maura), her scandalous divorce in the 1930s, and her subsequent marriage to the republican Communist aviator, Ignacio Hidalgo de Cisneros. De la Mora writes about her personal life, unlike Ibárruri, who never mentions her personal relationship with her husband, her separation from him, or her liaison with a Communist activist seventeen years her junior. Pasionaria's saintlike role would not have permitted her to discuss her private life, especially in regard to sexual matters. In Franz Borkenau's words, "The masses worship her, not for her intellect, but as a sort of saint who is to lead them in the days of trial and temptation."<sup>14</sup>

In spite of de la Mora's greater intimacy, she too maintains a stoical voice. Of her work with orphaned children she tells us: "I could not prevent the tears coming to my eyes. I had never seen a more pitiful sight than our first group of children. But it was not time to become sentimental. If we were to calm all those children and cope with their fits of hysterics we had to appear natural, to give them the impression that what was happening was nothing abnormal."<sup>15</sup> Both de la Mora and Ibárruri as political women tend to mitigate the dramatic nature of their testimonies because of their public roles, yet often their voices as women, mothers, and wives reveal the truth of Carol Gilligan's theory that "women not only define themselves in a context of human relationships but also judge themselves in terms of their ability to care."<sup>16</sup>

De la Mora wrote *In Place of Splendor* immediately after the civil war. Unlike Ibárruri's work, de la Mora's story of her life and her wartime experiences comes directly from her current insights into the problems that led to the civil war:

From that day, Spain was openly divided in two. The cleavage split families, brothers and sisters, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, and even husbands and wives. Politics could no longer be a subject for polite dinner-table conversation. People lived as Mon-

<sup>14</sup> Franz Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), 121.

<sup>15</sup> De la Mora, 249.

<sup>16</sup> Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 17.

archists or Republicans, reactionaries or progressives. Men [*sic*] decided for freedom, or against it. Most of Spain, the peasants, the workers, part of the small middle class, stood for the Republic. And all of the rich and privileged Spain, the big industrialists, the land-owners, the titled nobility, the church dignitaries (though not all the village priests) stood against it.<sup>17</sup>

De la Mora fits her personal and political life into the larger context of her country and its citizens. Her double-voiced autobiography—historical as well as personal—concerns the life of an upper-class woman, in contrast to Ibárruri's *They Shall Not Pass*. Yet the two writers are similar in their desire to insert themselves into the history of Spain and to denounce the repression of women. After all, both de la Mora and Ibárruri perceive themselves as exceptional women. They purport to tell the truth about themselves and Spain. They ignore the arbitrary nature of memory and its deceitful selectivity, and they seem unconcerned with the fictional elements that must always enter into telling one's own story. This lack of critical distance is true of nearly all accounts of the war written by Spaniards. In fact, the only mildly "objective" accounts of the Spanish civil war have been written by foreign witnesses.<sup>18</sup>

### Exile

Imprisonment and/or execution were avoided by many women—particularly the "visible" ones—who were able to escape from Spain at the end of the war, such as Victoria Kent and María Teresa León. Kent fled to Paris and took refuge in the Mexican embassy, escaping both Franco's police and Hitler's Gestapo. Later she moved into a flat and lived under an alias, "Madame Duval." Her philosophical novelized autobiography, *Cuatro años en París, 1940–1944*, describes her years of hiding and her observations of exiled Spaniards, the Nazi occupation of France, and especially the Jewish extermination camps. Her expressed intention is also a moral one; she explains as she describes the camp at Drancy: "I want never to forget what I know today. Let others write History and tell whatever they like; what I want is not to forget, and since our capacity to forget digests and grinds everything up, what I know today I want to put to paper."<sup>19</sup>

Kent's book resembles a philosophical essay, although it has a main character and an ephemeral plot, and entries are dated, as in a diary.

<sup>17</sup> De la Mora, 154.

<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the one salient exception by a Spaniard is Arturo Barea's excellent *Forging of a Rebel: The Clash*, trans. Ilse Barea (New York: Viking, 1974).

<sup>19</sup> Kent (n. 8 above), 159.

There is practically no action in *Cuatro años*; it is a record of mental processes: ruminations on war and destruction, the loss of identity, and fear and loneliness. Kent finds the French oblivious to the tragedy of Spain and its link to World War II, and also to the nightmare that Hitler is creating in France:

The meaning of our strife will start to be understood when the war, in that cruel phase that civil war usually presents, begins to bloody France's very soil, when the crude reality comes to tell us that the enemies of justice and independence are not only in the other trenches, but rather that, donning a foreign uniform, you have them here in your very own country. Only then will you understand the significance of our war, only then will we attain justice, when we realize that the war against oppression and tyranny began in Spain, with an investment of two million men.<sup>20</sup>

Kent hides behind the mask of a male protagonist, as in real life she hid behind a fake identity. Then when Paris is liberated, Kent switches from third-person to first-person narration and reveals herself as the book's protagonist. She tells her fictional character, Plácido, that he has been her only link to sanity: "Your sanity has been very useful to me, but I no longer need it."<sup>21</sup> Denunciation of war and the tragedy of exile is not her only goal; by means of her novelistic format and a male protagonist, she succeeds in providing a coldly intellectual analysis of the disasters of war. Yet she also achieves what could be referred to as a psycholiterary goal: psychological survival through writing.

*Cuatro años en París* is a curious testimony of survival through the creation of a fictional character who shares the author's history.<sup>22</sup> Though she does not attempt a faithful representation of historical facts as other autobiographers do, she successfully conveys the fear and anguish of exile and persecution. Her remarks about Spanish women and exile are particularly enlightening:

It has been said that exile produces deeper pain in a man than in a woman, because for a woman, her country is her home and her home goes with her. It goes without saying that these and others are masculine opinions, in general, of exiled men . . . today life for a woman is just as brutal as it is for a man. I would say that she is

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 181–82.

<sup>22</sup> When asked in an interview if the novel is truly autobiographical, Kent responded that she had lived through all the experiences described in the book (New York, January 1984).

mistreated more brutally than a man, because a woman is always unarmed in the face of violence. A woman in this war has known all the humiliations and sacrifices possible; she has been spared nothing. Exiled, pursued, ill-treated, imprisoned or deported, her country appears to her as an abandoned home.<sup>23</sup>

Kent's psycholiterary text appears more individualistic than Ibárruri's and de la Mora's historical-political works or García Madrid's and Doña's collective testimonies. However, her reflections on the need "not to forget" display her concern for the fate of her countrymen and women, as well as all the others who suffered in the Second World War.

María Teresa León had a similar Parisian experience, although she lived more openly than Kent. She, too, is concerned with the fact that Hitler was taking over free Europe and that the French seemed unaware: "Oh, if they had only known that we were from that gang of flea-bitten Spaniards, antifascists who had stood up against Hitler, that owner of Central Europe who had laid out his staff's plans for the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and France . . . ! But no one sees the problems of others and France had not taken any risks to do anything in the face of our destinies."<sup>24</sup>

León was a literary figure of some importance, although she played a secondary role to her companion Alberti. A Communist activist, she belonged to the Antifascist Intellectuals Committee. During the war she had organized a "guerrilla theater" that traveled to Spanish fronts to entertain the soldiers. León was also responsible for saving many art works of the Prado Museum. Along with Alberti, she lived in the poet Pablo Neruda's home in Paris and worked for Radio France until 1940. That year Franco asked the Vichy government for their extradition, and they fled to Argentina.

León's *Memoria de la melancolía* is the story of her and Alberti's activism during the war and of their odyssey of exile in France, Argentina, and Italy. Yet there is another level in this book also, a response to the objectification of Spanish exiles in France. She tells us:

A horde of nomads seeking survival was about to extend itself over the land. Hundreds of us, thousands, neither alive nor dead, were going around in a state of uncertainty, as though our feet were numb. We knew we had been expelled from something more than just Spain. The French looked at the intruders; some were compas-

<sup>23</sup> Kent, 74-75.

<sup>24</sup> León (n. 7 above), 216.

sionate and others were angry. These two attitudes crushed our sense of decency as combatants for world freedom. That's how we had gone through the streets of France, dragged by our sorrow, without knowing how to manage, indecisive, though sometimes someone would stop and embrace us and say: "Comrades!" and we thus advanced a little further, getting used to being the banished ones.<sup>25</sup>

The experience of exile and the varied professional and social backgrounds of these women inform their narrative style and focus. Kent creates a disguised autobiography of a hunted political woman. León describes her wartime activities: her theater group, how she rescued the art of the Prado, her odyssey through Europe and America. She writes from the viewpoint of the intellectual in exile and with the literary style of a writer of poetic fiction, touching on one episode after another without regard for chronology. León passes from first to second to third person with ease. She insists on her social class and her status as an intellectual, and she tells of her writer friends in exile. She does not attempt an accurate chronicle: "The truth is that nothing that I am writing pretends to be perfect or truthful. What I say represents the closed garden of what I feel. At times I am ashamed that I don't say anything better or say more, or scream with anger because the fury subsides as if rain had washed away the memories or someone had said to me: 'Why vengeance?'"<sup>26</sup>

Susanna Egan says that autobiography is often a translation of "life into literature that is, for the most part, the result of conscious artistry."<sup>27</sup> This is particularly true of León's work. Like Kent, she is impressionistic in her selections, though even more arbitrary. Her accounts of war and exile are similar to literary picture postcards, and she writes about the concept of memory with a characteristic staccato rhythm. León's use of the first-person plural implies that she regarded herself as part of the masses who flowed out of Spain at the end of the war. Thus, hers is also a voice of "collective" testimony, though not as consistently as in the works of the imprisoned autobiographers. She is, clearly, the most literary of the writers discussed here and the most poetic in her conception of autobiographical format. No one else conceives of her writing in such a purely ontological fashion as León, who writes with more emotion and less analytical observation than the others.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>27</sup> Susanna Egan, *Patterns of Experience in Autobiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 12.

## Prison

The political autobiographies of "visible" women differ strikingly from those of less exceptional background. The writers of prison memoirs, most of whom attempt to describe the fate of scores of women who shared the misery of prison life at the end of the war, were inspired more by their consciousness of collectivity than by a desire to explain their political activities. Many jails are described in these works, since cellmates were often transferred to break up underground political networks. The most often remembered is Ventas Prison in Madrid. Ironically, this institution was created by Victoria Kent while she was director general of prisons in the thirties, as an experiment in humanizing the penal system. It was built to house some five hundred women and even had a library, which was unheard of in those times. After the war, though, Ventas became a house of horrors; it has been said that ten to fourteen thousand were incarcerated there at the same time.<sup>28</sup>

Many imprisoned women were prompted to write—after forty years of the Franco regime—because of their outrage at the silence imposed on them during all those years. Interestingly, the two autobiographies of incarceration discussed here, *Requiem por la libertad* and *Desde la noche y la niebla*, are camouflaged by their use of third-person narration. Angeles García Madrid, in *Requiem por la libertad*, which she wrote and published after the death of Franco, wrote in the third person because she felt it would lend objectivity and distance to her story. Of her purpose she says, "I never thought about writing this book. But these are things which must be made known." Yet writing her story of prison life was painful; it took her two years to complete because, she says, "There were times when I would begin to choke with pain."<sup>29</sup> García Madrid's autobiographical protagonist, "Angeles," represents one of the clearest examples of the "urgent solitary voice of collective testimony"; she speaks very little of herself and focuses more on her cellmates. The author spent three years in Spanish prisons; she testifies to many victims of torture, illness, verbal abuse, rape, hunger, and insanity with whom she shared cells during that time. García Madrid also describes the execution of a number of her cellmates. Her story is, like other prison autobiographies, a chilling

<sup>28</sup> *Libro blanco sobre las cárceles franquistas* by Angel Suárez and Equipo 36 claims there were 10,000 (Paris: Editions Ruedo Ibérico, 1976), 73. Doña speaks of 14,000 as does Petra Cuevas, a Communist activist who was imprisoned there (interview with Cuevas, Madrid, December 1985). Guilana di Febo, in her pioneer study of female activism in Spain, claims that 9,000–11,000 women passed through Ventas; *Resistencia y movimiento de mujeres en España, 1936–1976* (Barcelona: ICARIA Editorial, S.A., 1979), 28.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with García Madrid, Madrid, Spain, December 15, 1985; the translation is mine.

tale of the persecution of women who had committed the "crime" of becoming activists during the civil war. She speaks, as does Doña, from the point of view of a rank-and-file working woman: "It is important to know that these women, victims of an adverse and senseless situation, are absolutely simple and normal people. They are not famous leaders or great activists. They are, simply, a group of women who fought at all costs to defend their own dignity as human beings; some with more consciousness of the cause than others; the majority only because of their natural instinct."<sup>30</sup>

García Madrid, as the "urgent voice" of these women, has a clear moral purpose in writing her autobiography. Her desire to tell the tragic stories of her cellmates is coupled with her own need to denounce those responsible for their misfortune. Also, as a self-taught writer with several volumes of poetry to her credit, García Madrid used her talent to tell the stories of thousands of other women who were incapable of committing their own tales to paper.<sup>31</sup> The importance of this author's testimony—like a number of the other books composed by relatively uneducated women—lies in its capacity to portray events that would otherwise remain unknown. For example, it becomes clear upon reading García Madrid and others that for the secret police of the Franco regime, women who had defended the republic were invariably considered "red whores." Scenes of both verbal and physical sexual abuse consistently feature the equation activist = promiscuous woman. Scenes like the one in *Requiem por la libertad* when García Madrid is being interrogated and the police commissioner screams, "She thinks she's smart, but she's nothing but a red whore!" were typical.<sup>32</sup> Customarily, these words prefaced physical abuse.

García Madrid also writes of fortitude and solidarity among imprisoned women: "These women made it clear that they could totally ignore the 'weakness' of their sex, go through a thousand calamities and endure any tragedy that happened to them without letting their executioners have the pleasure of seeing them collapse before their whims. They were conscious of solidarity in everything and they never permitted themselves to be demoralized . . . in spite of the fact that so very many lost their lives there and many were close to losing them."<sup>33</sup>

She also has a remarkable compassion for women who were not behind bars but had a loved one in prison. These women, whom she calls

<sup>30</sup> García Madrid (n. 6 above), 12.

<sup>31</sup> In 1930, 58.2 percent of the female population was illiterate, according to Geraldine M. Scanlon, in *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868-1974)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1976), 50.

<sup>32</sup> García Madrid, 43.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.



"prisoners of the street," extend her collective consciousness beyond the parameters of her condition and that of her cellmates:

Speaking of the spirit and the strength of these women, it is impossible to ignore those who suffered similar prison outside of the prison gates. The women who stood at the doors of the jails! The fiancée who spent years, with a package in her hands, at the entrance of different prisons; putting up with the cold, rain, heat and gross insults in exchange for seeing her loved one . . . the wives, sisters, daughters, but above all the mothers. The "free" mothers suffered the same misery as the jailed ones, or worse. They bore so many insults and outrages and so much pain that perhaps they would have lived more peacefully inside the prison.<sup>34</sup>

García Madrid writes of terror, of grave illnesses that go untreated, and of prisoners doomed to death by firing squad.<sup>35</sup> The death penalty, called "La Pepa," was constantly on the lips of the prisoners, and each morning they waited with dread to find out who would be liquidated. The author bitterly describes the indelible mark this made on her: "She thought that no matter what she would witness in the future, nothing would impress her as much as what she was living today . . . and if she were lucky enough to get out of this rathole alive, even if she lived a thousand years, it would not be possible to erase this memory from her mind. It was like the ancient sacrifices to the gods. The sacrifice of innocents, the more innocent the better—there couldn't be a better holocaust."<sup>36</sup>

García Madrid wrote her book in the 1980s, evidence of a continued morbid obsession with her prison experiences. Her outrage and moral need to tell her story are the compelling elements of this text.

Some of the same elements mediate the writing of Juana Doña's "novel-testimony," *Desde la noche y la niebla*, where she tells the story of "Leonor" and her prison mates. Doña chose a novel format, changing the names and some of the events because, as she explains in the introduction to the 1978 edition:

When I wrote this story in 1967, my years in prison were still fresh in my memory: the remembrance of those whom I saw taken out to the firing squad, the others who died at my side, of those who survived all the hardships, and the bitterness of thinking about the

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> García Madrid herself contracted tuberculosis and was left to die with the terminal patients; however, perhaps because she was still in her teens, she recovered.

<sup>36</sup> García Madrid, 113.

women who were still in prison suffering what I had left behind. Because of this, I had no other desire but to give living testimony to my surroundings, but I was bound by anonymity, and I couldn't use authentic names. So I decided to do it in novel form with false names. But I want it to be known that not one of the stories told here is the product of my imagination. And I want to clarify at the same time, that this is not an authentically autobiographical novel. I was in the resistance then and I had to distort some facts to hide my identity because I was confident that the story would somehow be published and I took those basic precautions.<sup>37</sup>

Underneath these expressed intentions lies another less apparent one, which Doña hinted at in an interview. When asked why she used a novelistic form for *Desde la noche y la niebla*, she replied, "I don't know. Perhaps I haven't rationalized it. I think I started that way and it was easier, more accessible. Of all the books written about women in Spain, this one has been the most widely read. And the most well known abroad."<sup>38</sup> The author was clearly concerned with a wide readership. In addition, she found it a personally safer way to break through the silence about women activists and their treatment during the Franco regime.

Yet Doña's book elucidates more clearly than any other the fact that Spanish women's role in the war has not yet been fully articulated. She sees her goal as "giving testimony to the suffering of thousands of women who were persecuted, tortured and executed for defending the general rights of our oppressed people, but who never questioned their own oppression."<sup>39</sup> Doña demonstrates that the civil war indeed acted as a catalyst for Spanish women in the twentieth century: "The necessities of war have introduced the immense majority of these women to an active life. This fact has made them radical activists; in these three years they have learned so much, waking from their lethargy in order to look at themselves as new beings."<sup>40</sup>

Doña dramatically portrays the double oppression women began to suffer at the end of the war and their specific tragedies—for example, separation from their husbands and children. On the other hand, it was tragic for women in prison to be pregnant or to be accompanied by their children, who until the age of four were permitted to stay with their mothers. Many children died from malnutrition, dysentery, and other diseases. Mothers were often too ill or injured to nurse their babies, and many watched helplessly as their children's lives slipped away. Doña tells

<sup>37</sup> Doña (n. 5 above), 16–17.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Doña, Madrid, December 17, 1985; the translation is mine.

<sup>39</sup> Doña, 18.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 30.

us, "What could those children hope for, from those emaciated mothers? They did everything possible to transmit some life into their dying children, they hoped by sheer will power to save them. They spent the minutes and the hours in hell when they realized that will power was helpless in the face of hunger and poverty. Why does it always have to be the mothers, the women, who get the worst part of the deal?"<sup>41</sup>

Doña denounces every aspect of prison life but is most vehement when describing experiences specific to women. She insists that age did not determine who was raped, and both teenagers and grandmothers were among the victims: "Rape was daily fare; the abuse of power by men against women under those circumstances acquired dramatic proportions. The so-called 'reds' were less than nothing to the macho fascists. The rape of female prisoners had nothing to do with sexual desire; it was simply an act of power, humiliation, sadism."<sup>42</sup>

As with García Madrid and other autobiographers, Doña confirms the equation activist = whore. She, too, describes the solidarity among cellmates which helped them survive mental and physical illness, the loss of loved ones, torture, and death sentences. The "protagonist" of *Desde la noche y la niebla* spent time on death row until her sentence was commuted to thirty years (Doña spent eighteen years altogether in Spanish prisons). She clearly understands the importance of political solidarity, perhaps better than the other prison autobiographers because of her long-term experience in jail. Like her fellow autobiographers, Doña tells the stories of many cellmates; she invites her readers to see into the lives of female political prisoners and to sense the agony of living death. Yet underlying those stories of tragedy is an eloquent testimony of hope and a brave battle for survival against many odds.

The strength of these female autobiographers and many others is that they speak both as individuals and as part of a collective consciousness that was deprived of its dignity, its democracy, its freedom, its country. And they all speak—some more clearly than others—as women who have experienced the consequences of war and its aftermath. Their voices form a unique chorus: no other historical, sociological, or literary source has provided us with such insights into the lives of Spanish women and the impact of the civil war on their lives. Spanish women's autobiographies dealing with the civil war and its consequences are undoubtedly the most important source of information about the role of women in contemporary Spanish history.

*Department of Spanish  
California State University, Long Beach*

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 158.

## The Anatomy of a Marriage: Letters of Emma Spaulding Bryant, 1873

*Shan Holt*

IN ALL MY LIFE I have never been grossly insulted until now—and that by my husband . . . I have never lived with you on other terms than of the most perfect love and trust and equality. I never intend to live with you on other terms.<sup>1</sup> Emma Spaulding Bryant wrote these lines early one August night in 1873 to John Emory Bryant, her husband of nine years. Posted the following morning, her note initiated a series of anguished and eloquent letters between wife and husband. Their letters reveal to us aspects of the lives of middle-class whites in the nineteenth century that are otherwise hidden under the veil of privacy, namely, the ordeals of gynecology and the existence of discord in marriage.

Emma Spaulding had married John Bryant in 1864, when she was a young teacher of mathematics and he, a soldier in the Union army. Both were natives of Maine and keen abolitionists. They had met in 1860 in Buckfield, Maine, where John had taught school for one year. He had boarded with Emma's family and enrolled Emma as one of his pupils.

Committed abolitionists before the war, John and Emma were loyal Republicans during Reconstruction. Following John's discharge from the Union army in 1864, he moved to Georgia to join the Freedman's Bu-

I wish to thank the entire staff of the Manuscript Department of the William R. Perkins Library at Duke University, and especially Virginia Daley and Pat Webb, for their generous and invaluable assistance with all aspects of this project. Research for this article was supported in part by an Archie K. Davis grant from the North Caroliniana Society.

<sup>1</sup> Undated letter, August 1873, probably August 6, in John Emory Bryant Papers, Letters, 1870–75, 18-C, Box 3, Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (hereafter referred to as the Duke MS Department).

reau; he hoped also to build a political career in the Republican party. Emma followed him to Georgia in February 1866.

Unfortunately for his political ambitions, John was an impassioned, rather difficult man who united a volatile temper with a vigorous faith in his own personal righteousness. He spoke his mind freely, and though he was often correct, he was seldom judicious. As a soldier, for example, he spent four months in prison after accusing a superior officer of cowardice. John was vindicated—and given command of his regiment—when that same colonel deserted on the eve of battle.

When he joined the Freedman's Bureau in Augusta, Georgia, John embraced the unpopular causes of the freedpeople. He worked to provide them with free titles to farms, interceded for black laborers in wage disputes with their white employers, and labored to encourage black control of schools and especially to train black teachers to replace Northern whites. John's zeal brought him into conflict both with his superiors in the Freedman's Bureau and with prominent Georgia whites. In her diary, Ella Thomas, an Augusta matron, noted that although "the Negroes regard him as a Savior . . . his name stunk like carrion in the nostrils of the Southern [white] people."<sup>2</sup>

His bureau mentor, General Rufus Saxton, was, like John, a strong advocate of distributing land to the freedpeople. When Saxton was dismissed over the issue in December 1865, John refused to leave with him despite pressure from his superiors. He began instead to build a political faction for himself upon his credibility as a bureau agent and his base of support among black Republicans. In April 1866, his behavior brought him into open conflict with Saxton's replacement, General Davis Tillson. Their quarrel was so public that General O. O. Howard, head of the Freedman's Bureau, had to intervene. During this episode, John was caned on the street by an irate Georgian and Emma was insulted when she took a group of black children to a local cemetery to strew flowers on the graves of Union soldiers.<sup>3</sup>

John traveled a great deal to protect his political interests, to lobby for patronage jobs, and to promote several Republican newspapers that he published; Emma filled in during his long absences as newspaper editor. Largely because of the controversial activities of her husband, Emma never felt welcome or comfortable among her Georgia neighbors. The wives of carpetbaggers did not have "the political associates their husbands enjoyed," nor could they count upon the kinds of collegiality that helped missionary teachers, the other large group of transplanted North-

<sup>2</sup> Ella Thomas diary, quoted in Ruth Currie-McDaniel, *Carpetbagger of Conscience: A Biography of John Emory Bryant* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 52–53.

<sup>3</sup> Currie-McDaniel, 47–67.

erners.<sup>4</sup> Emma suffered in this isolation, and when straitened finances permitted, she would spend extended periods with family and friends in the North.

John's biographer indicates that John was a difficult husband who left Emma in serious want during most of their married life. Her efforts at running his newspapers, and the generosity of reluctant Northern relatives, provided much of the family income. John repeatedly failed to respond even when Emma importuned him most desperately for financial help. The vagaries of postbellum politics brought John again and again to the brink of brilliant success, only to cast him back into poverty and disgrace. In 1888 he finally left Georgia to take up a lucrative business selling bonds and mortgages in Mount Vernon, New York.

Emma did not accompany John to New York; she took a job teaching math at Grant Memorial University in Athens, Tennessee, a Methodist college that had been one of John's many projects.<sup>5</sup> Emma enrolled their daughter Alice at Grant to finish her education. John and Emma were reunited in New York after Alice's graduation, and they lived together there until John's death from cancer in 1900. Emma died at Alice's home the following year.<sup>6</sup>

Despite their separations and financial difficulties, John and Emma seem to have maintained a warm and affectionate mutual regard throughout their marriage. Emma's many surviving letters are full of loving words, delightful stories about the antics of baby Alice, quite conventional deference to John's opinions and desires, and continual reaffirmation of her support for his work and sympathy in his troubles. John's letters, save for the years of their courtship, are more reserved, though he seems to have routinely addressed her in letters as "my own darling wife."<sup>7</sup> During his fatal illness he wrote a touching testimony to his appreciation of and regard for her sacrifices. When Emma was forbidden to attend him during his treatment in a New York hospital, he pleaded with the doctors to allow her a cot in his room. He argued that having stood by him so loyally during all the hard years, Emma should be allowed to stay with him at the end.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>5</sup> The name of the school changed repeatedly during the postbellum period. Bryant's biographer refers to it as East Tennessee Wesleyan University, but the archivists at the Bryant papers at Duke have it as Grant Memorial University (named for Ulysses S. Grant) by 1888.

<sup>6</sup> Currie-McDaniel, 179; see also Carolyn Lesjak, "The Diaries and Letters of Emma Bryant: Voices of a Nineteenth-Century Woman" (Duke MS Department, 1988, typescript); and the John Emory Bryant Papers in the Duke MS Department.

<sup>7</sup> See her reference to his resuming the use of that phrase after the argument chronicled here. Letter, Emma to John, August 19, 1873.

<sup>8</sup> Alice Bryant Zeller autobiography, cited in Currie-McDaniel, 179.

In August 1873, however, after nine years of marriage, Emma wrote the indignant note to John that is quoted at the beginning of this article. The three letters reprinted here record the Bryants' painful and immensely revealing battle.<sup>9</sup> That summer Emma and Alice were visiting family in Illinois and Ohio. Writing from Georgia, John apparently accused Emma of adultery with a doctor who had treated her in Cleveland.<sup>10</sup> Her innocence seems quite conclusive and her outrage and hurt were enormous.

For good measure, John seems to have taken the opportunity to lecture Emma on the duties of wives, including subordination to their husbands. At one point he wondered whether perhaps she had been raped rather than having been an accomplice in her "ruin." If so, he raged—treating her implicitly as his own property—he was immensely injured and resolved upon revenge at any cost.

Emma's letters to him answer his suspicions in detail. She obviously found it mortifying to explain the gynecological particulars even to her husband and commanded him to destroy her letters.<sup>11</sup> His failure to do so has provided us with rich and explicit documents describing the late nineteenth-century world of male doctors and their middle-class female patients. Emma compares methods of treatment, comments upon the use of the speculum, and alludes to the ways in which female friends and family protected each other from disreputable practitioners. She also reveals the complex dynamics of modesty and professionalism that criss-crossed patient/doctor relations.

In addition to rebutting his substantive accusations, Emma flared at John's male supremacy. She rebuked him for his arrogant lectures on wifely duty, insisting that she would live as his wife and partner, not as his slave. Her language was colorful, emphatic, and startlingly "feminist," considering the deference and loyalty she habitually expressed in her other letters.

<sup>9</sup> These letters, written between August 6 and August 19, 1873, form part of the large collection of John Emory Bryant papers in the Duke MS Department. Bryant's papers are scattered in three major collections, at Duke, in the Maine State Archives in Augusta, and at the American Missionary Association Archives in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Duke collection contains mostly John Bryant's political correspondence, as well as many letters from Emma spanning the years of her courtship with and marriage to John.

<sup>10</sup> His letters do not survive, except for the two fragments that Emma fastened to her own letter of August 19, 1873. Emma refers to accidentally burning a page she wished to save, indicating that she probably burned all the letters except those fragments. There is reason to believe that red pencil marks on her letters were put there by John, providing some clues to the content of his responses. She also responded to his accusations point for point, thus justifying some confidence in guessing what he had written.

<sup>11</sup> In a letter written July 25, 1873, wherein she told John briefly that she was getting treatment for her "uterine difficulties," she specifically asked him to destroy the letter, since it dealt with matters of a "private nature."

Emma and John were an unusual couple in both their commitment to abolition and their willingness to work for the rights of freedpeople, but their unconventionality seems to have been limited to issues of race equality. Indeed, nothing in their married life betrays any commitment to the full equality of women and men.

Stung by the rhetoric in John's letters, however, Emma revealed that beneath her respectful deference to John, she maintained a sophisticated and passionate sense of her own unique human value. In Emma's mind it was precisely her individual worth that gave her deferential behavior its significance. If her marriage were built upon anything but the free and loving consent of equals, she stated, she could not remain in it at all; if in marriage she was "inferior" she could not conceive of being a wife. More important still, Emma had taken it for granted that John, too, believed her to be his equal. That he did not came to her as a brutal shock; she found John's words so appalling, in fact, that she protested he must have lost his mind.

These letters shed light on a number of issues of considerable significance for women's history. They offer a personal perspective on the changing practice of gynecology in the late nineteenth-century United States. They also provide an intimate look at the construction of a white middle-class marriage.

The increasing professionalism of medicine in the United States during the nineteenth century, and especially after the Civil War, engaged doctors in an overt struggle with other health practitioners—homeopaths, herbalists, midwives, and neighbors—for the confidence of female patients.<sup>12</sup> In her letters Emma indicates that she would prefer a female doctor and implies that John might prefer her to have one. She feels at risk under the medical ministrations of men. She suggests that many women would prefer female doctors, noting that a sufficiency of women in medical practice would "supersede [*sic*] the males."<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, as her letters mention repeatedly, women rely on each other for referrals to competent and virtuous doctors, tell each other about the failings of certain practitioners, and actually protect each other during times of extreme vulnerability such as in childbirth.

<sup>12</sup> Virginia Drachman, *Hospital with a Heart: Women Doctors and the Paradox of Separatism at the New England Hospital, 1862–1969* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984); Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry* (New York: Basic, 1982); William Rothstein, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); Jane Donegan, *Women and Men Midwives: Medicine, Morality and Misogyny in Early America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1978); Mary Roth Walsh, "Doctors Wanted, No Women Need Apply": *Sexual Barriers in the Medical Profession, 1835–1975* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977).

<sup>13</sup> Letter of August 7, 1873.



Medical historians debate whether new technologies, notably anesthesia and the speculum, helped or hindered doctors in their competition with other practitioners. Emma certainly preferred examination by finger to examination by speculum. The speculum, she wrote, "is attended with something of pain and exposure."<sup>14</sup> While control over the technology of pain relief may have aided doctors in overcoming the primacy of midwives in the birthing rooms, the technology of the speculum, for Emma at least, made professional gynecologists more alien and alarming.

It is also worth noting that Emma did not feel helpless or excessively squeamish either about her gynecological illness or about her encounters with doctors. She seems to have communicated some of her concerns about her condition to John. She paid attention to her body's weakness, sought help and relief at every plausible opportunity, and made confident judgments about which doctors she might trust and which she would avoid.

It is difficult to ascertain just what Emma's medical complaint was. Ulcerations of the vagina and the perineum were commonly reported in the medical literature. Lesions were usually treated topically and with some success with a silver nitrate solution; this may be the treatment Emma was receiving.<sup>15</sup> Most such conditions, however, were reportedly caused by injuries during childbirth or by venereal infection. It is conceivable that John contracted a venereal infection while he was a soldier and passed it on to Emma. In her letters, however, she refers to having endured this ailment "for ten years or more"; presuming that this was an accurate appraisal of the duration of her suffering, the disease predates her marriage by at least a year, making it unlikely (though not impossible) that she suffered from venereal disease.

The thoughts and actions of middle-class women like Emma Bryant are relevant to a variety of important historical questions. Did women

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. The history of the speculum is fascinating all in its own right. The first recorded use seems to have been by a French doctor, Joseph-Claude-Anselme Recamier, in 1801. Throughout the century, dozens of different designs for the device were promoted, each offering different services, levels of visibility, and dramatically different levels of comfort and safety for the patient. The modern, double-tongued variety was first designed by a French woman, a doctor named Madame Boivin. The demands of modesty required that the doctor not look at the vagina while inserting the device and immediately upon its insertion wrap the patient's drapes tightly around the circumference of the instrument, thus allowing the doctor to see nothing but the small circle of cervix visible through the tube. Despite these extreme measures, most women apparently felt the examination an enormous and humiliating violation (James Ricci, *One Hundred Years of Gynecology, 1800-1900* [Philadelphia: Blakiston Co., 1945], 20 ff.).

<sup>15</sup> Ricci, 20; Charles D. Meigs, *Acute and Chronic Diseases of the Neck of the Uterus* (Philadelphia: Blanchard & Co., 1854); David Hayes Agnew, *Lacerations of the Perineum and Vaginal Fistula, Their History and Treatment* (Philadelphia: Lindsay, 1873); and Amedee Courty, *A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of the Uterus, Ovaries and Fallopian Tubes* (Philadelphia: Blakiston Co., 1883).

prefer midwives or doctors? How did new technology, such as anesthesia or the speculum, affect the relationships of women with their physicians? Did a new medical view of their bodies and illnesses empower or restrict women? For women themselves, were attitudes toward their bodies connected with access to power within or outside of marriage?

Unfortunately for those who would pursue these questions, nineteenth-century women were generally evasive about matters of the body. Middle- and upper-class white women like Emma, those most likely to be literate and to record their thoughts in letters and diaries, usually confined themselves to euphemism and indirection on the subjects of their own health and reproduction. We have Emma's letters only because John disobeyed her explicit instructions to destroy them.

Unable to find substantial private accounts of "respectable" middle-class sexual thinking, historians have combed the records of public quarrels over "nonrespectable" sexual behavior. The many studies of prostitution, abandonment, free love, homosexuality, or miscegenation provide few clues to the private dynamics within most middle-class marriages. Even more rarely do historians hear, as in Emma's case, a married woman speaking for herself.

Emma's letters reveal fascinating aspects of the structure of her marriage. If John was held responsible for the financial strength of the family, Emma was clearly the manager of its emotional core. Faced with a conflict serious enough to destroy her marriage, Emma moved immediately to deflect the threat. Beginning in her first letter, she pressed on John an acceptable rationale for his unkind treatment of her. Repeatedly, almost desperately at points, she insisted that he was mad, possessed, captive of a demon, and in other ways *not* himself. She even addressed "the man I married" over the head of the man who was writing "such terrible letters" to her.

She also carefully orchestrated the dialogue between them. Expecting a visit from John several months after the end of this exchange of letters, Emma enjoined him to silence in her presence on the painful subject. She explained that while she had been able to weigh her words in her letters, she did not trust her control in face-to-face conversation. He apparently consented to this rule.

Emma used these stratagems to contain the damage the battle could do to their marriage. By insisting that John was "mad" or "possessed"—not himself—when he suspected her of adultery, she made it psychologically easier for the couple to resume friendly and trusting relations.

Temperance literature of the period makes clear that many women and children, both poor and privileged, were routinely injured—emotionally, physically, or financially—by the drunken and brutal behavior of husbands "gone mad." Emma's insistence on John's dual nature, the good

man she loved and the bad demon who injured her, is a way many nineteenth-century wives might have coped with the extreme behavior of their husbands.

By forbidding John to engage her spontaneously on the subject of his suspicions, Emma betrayed another condition of their married life. Her injunction guaranteed that she would not be goaded into saying anything unforgivable to John. Emma's behavior implies that she had more confidence in her own ability to forgive than in John's. Whether due to personal temperament or because of commonplace beliefs in the pliant and forgiving nature of women, Emma felt she could absorb a great deal of personal injury from John and still be a loving and faithful wife. She could not, however, inflict injuries—speak in anger and pain as fully as John had done—and expect that John could as readily forgive the harm.

For Emma and other women like her, being the "Angel of the Home" required more than piety and purity; it required appeasing male anger, however ill-justified, whenever it endangered family stability. Emma's own anger was very nearly silenced in her efforts to absorb, deflect, and manage her husband's feelings.

Emma's appeasement seems to have worked, preserving affectionate relations with her husband and sustaining her family. In her letter of August 11, the last of this series, she assured John, "honestly I do not believe that we shall clash in our views in the future as much as we have done in the past." What that promise cost Emma in the ensuing years is left for us to guess.

Taken together, the medical and marital information embedded in Emma's letters addresses larger feminist debates about the historical allocation of social power. Feminist historians and theorists have traced a complex connection between the social power ceded to women and larger cultural attitudes toward the earth, sexuality, and the female body.<sup>16</sup> Emma's letters explore specific links among male and female attitudes toward the female body, new cultural and scientific ideas, and life within a middle-class marriage.

Doctors, and women themselves, debated in these years whether female bodies were "moral" entities or "medical" entities. Those who viewed the female body in fundamentally moral terms contended that medical examination and treatment for vaginal or uterine disease violated a woman's purity. Proponents of this view doubted the propriety of any woman other than a prostitute being subjected to a medical exami-

<sup>16</sup> See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Pantheon, 1970); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984); Rosemary Radford Ruether (public lecture, Vassar College, February 10, 1980).

nation. Middle-class women who felt compelled to seek a doctor's care occasionally traveled great distances from their homes to preserve anonymity and salvage their dignity. Such women faced a bitter dilemma. By seeking care anonymously, they put themselves outside the female network of referral, which Emma's letters so vividly describe, thereby increasing the risks to their safety.

For those who embraced an increasingly scientific worldview, the female body lost some of its moral symbolism. Female anatomy and disease became a subject of scientific and medical inquiry, and doctors gradually took on the aura of dispassionate professionals. Consequently, the concern over threats to female "purity" declined, and the willingness of women to seek proper treatment probably increased.<sup>17</sup>

Emma and John held opinions on the status of the female body that were virtually at opposite ends of the medical/moral spectrum. Emma's was the more "medical" view; John's, the more "moral." Emma sought treatment for her uterine illness openly and often, and she accepted internal examination as a matter of course, though acknowledging its discomforts. John, deeply suspicious of Emma's doctors (and of Emma herself) and claiming her inviolate body as his own property, belonged to the old, moral school.

John also taunted Emma with accusations of "free lovism."<sup>18</sup> "Free lover" was an epithet commonly applied to advocates of women's rights by opponents of the nineteenth-century women's movement in their attempt to discredit the entire cause. By equating advocacy of women's rights with sexual libertinism, opponents willfully ignored the intentions of the largest and most moderate wing of the movement—namely, to strengthen the institution of marriage by securing rights for married women.<sup>19</sup>

As in the medical debates, Emma took the more progressive position, while John's was the more reactionary view. Emma asserted her right to equality, trust, and liberty as the basis of a loving marriage. John replied that such talk could only lead to sexual anarchy.

Technology, sexuality, and power intertwine thematically in Emma's letters. John Bryant's mistrust of gynecology led to a suspicion of infidelity which, in turn, provoked him to declare his rights over Emma. Even while moving swiftly to minimize the danger inherent in their quarrel, Emma mounted a spirited defense. She affirmed her right to seek medical care and refused to compromise her rights in their marriage. Her body, like her heart, she maintained, was his only so long as he returned respect for respect. She made a dignified and emphatic case; one wonders

<sup>17</sup> Ricci, *passim*, but esp. the introduction and 28–31; Meigs, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Letter of August 11, 1873; see portion of John's letter attached by Emma.

<sup>19</sup> Lesjak (n. 6 above), esp. 15–17.

how many other seemingly deferential nineteenth-century wives shared her point of view.

*Department of History  
University of Pennsylvania*

\*\*\*

**The letters<sup>20</sup>**

[Letter 1]<sup>21</sup>

In all my life I have never been grossly insulted until now—and that by my husband<sup>22</sup>

Do not dare to write me again, or expect ever to receive another line from me until you can assure me of your unlimited confidence in me and feel sincerely repentant for the terrible things you have said to me. I have never lived with you on other terms than those of the most perfect love and trust and equality.

I never intend to live with you on other terms. I love you and I hope to be your true wife for time and eternity but I cannot (God helping me) will not cast my womanhood from me. I trust you fully in spite of circumstances if need be—I will receive nothing less in return.

Emma

[Letter 2]

Wakeman, Aug. 7, 1873<sup>23</sup>

My Darling Husband,

I wish to add something to what I sent in Lucy's letter yesterday (I retract nothing of it) First of all, I want to tell you that from the very depths of my heart I grieve that you have been and are so distressed. Even my woman's indignation at the unspeakably dreadful

<sup>20</sup> For originals of these letters, see John Emory Bryant Papers, Letters 1870–75, 18-C, Box 3, Duke MS Department. The format, grammar, and syntax of the originals have been retained in their reproduction here.

<sup>21</sup> Undated note, probably written August 6, 1873, enclosed with a letter to John from Emma's sister, Lucy.

<sup>22</sup> All underlining is Emma's own.

<sup>23</sup> Emma was staying in Wakeman, Illinois, with her sister Lucy. Though Emma's family was from Maine and Emma grew up there, her parents and several siblings migrated to Illinois and Ohio in the late 1860s.

things that you have written to me is overborne by my sorrow for you, and my desire to help you out of your distress.

Have you forgotten the old saying that "Whom the Gods wish to destroy they first make mad."? You are mad, both angry and insane. And beware that you do not thereby destroy the happiness of both of us!

Do you imagine that I could ever lay my head upon your breast again without the fullest recall of every sentiment and insinuation of your letters of the past week? without the assurance of your full, unmeasured confidence in me?

If you think that I could or would you have not learned to know me in these nine years of our wedded life.

Now, my darling, in true honest love let me remind you of the confidence I have had in you, and the confidence (or lack of it) that you have returned me for it. In all your social relations with ladies I have always trusted you fully—have never allowed circumstances which even seemed suspicious to make me doubt your honor—have been ready to believe that I was mistaken, that circumstance lied—anything but to believe you false.

If I even had doubts of any lady the fact that she was a trusted friend of yours has been sufficient for me to battle against those doubts and refuse to entertain them. Whenever you venture to visit any lady—to be with her alone at night—or under any circumstances without first "consulting me" I do not reproach you with lack of obedience or falsity to your duties as a husband. There should be no chains in love (those pertain to slavery instead).

I expect and wish you to exercise your own judgement when away from me: I grant you "the same right—to do as you please" not as a "single person" has, but as a married woman has.

I never wrote you in more sincere honest love than I write this letter! Now look at the other side. Since I married you I have never felt other than repulsion at the thought of a kiss or caress of any kind from any man but you unless it be my immediate family or yours.

Have never had that feeling toward any man but yourself that would make his kiss pleasant to me. From the present time till now not only my acts but the thoughts of my heart have been open to your inspection.

Now for the medical question.

When I was sick in Augusta<sup>24</sup> you did not scruple to send old Dr. Em in to see me with the expectation that he would treat me for uterine difficulties which of course presupposed the "examination" (of which you

<sup>24</sup> John lived in Augusta, Georgia, beginning in May 1865, as the Freedman's Bureau's general superintendent of freedmen for Georgia. In January 1866 he left the bureau and began to publish a Republican newspaper, the *Loyal Georgian*, out of Augusta. Emma joined him in Augusta in February 1866.

have such a distorted idea) you were in the house at the time and I really wished you with me and yet you did not come in you left me in my room alone—"abed" in the room—expecting an examination—and Dr. Em I would quite as soon suspect of licentiousness as Dr. Saunders,<sup>25</sup> of indelicacy with his patients much sooner. I have been informed by a woman who has employed Dr. Em and who has been with him in other cases that he is sometimes a very vulgar old fellow with his patients. The only cases in which my person was ever exposed in the least degree to the gaze of any man but you were slightly in Portland when Dr. Fitch<sup>26</sup> examined me with the speculum (which Dr. Saunders does not use), and at the birth of our first baby when a Dr. of your selection raised the clothes in applying the cloths to me after birth (as Mrs. Sherman<sup>27</sup> tells me), I was in that condition that I did not realize it and was not able to defend myself, as, Thank God! I now am—

Still again when I went with you and baby to consult a strange physician in Savannah,<sup>28</sup> after we received direction regarding baby you took baby out for a walk and left me alone with a strange physician in his office (in a much more retired spot than Dr. Saunders office is) to consult him about uterine difficulties, when the natural expectation always is that a physician will wish to make an examination when there are such difficulties, or otherwise he cannot tell what treatment the case requires.

After all these things do you wonder that I supposed you had lost your old objection to my being alone with a physician for consultation on treatment of uterine difficulties? It had so far made me forget your former scruples that the thought of them never even entered my mind.

Now we come to going to Dr. Saunders—

For ten years or more I have suffered from this weakness, to your distress as well as mine—Lucy has been under Dr. Saunders treatment for the same difficulties, only much more serious ones, for three years—she recommends him to me—I have found no physician in the South to whose skill I could trust. Mr. Sherman<sup>29</sup> has treated me, helping but not curing me and not able to tell me why I do not fully recover. I go to Dr. Saunders and by making an examination by inserting the finger in the vagina (which is what I meant by saying that his treatment is like Mr. Sherman, i.e. that neither of them use the speculum, which is attended with some-

<sup>25</sup> Dr. Saunders is the doctor Emma was visiting in Cleveland, Ohio, whom John suspected of assaulting her.

<sup>26</sup> An unidentified doctor, probably consulted in Portland, Maine.

<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Sherman was the Bryants' landlady at the time.

<sup>28</sup> The Bryants moved to Savannah, Georgia, in 1872 when John secured a patronage post there as deputy collector of customs.

<sup>29</sup> Mr. Sherman, the Bryants' landlord, seems also to have been a medical practitioner of some kind.

thing of pain and exposure) he tells me that there is ulceration of long standing, that it is gradually weakening me (as I have so long realized) that it will be comparatively easy of cure and that by a weeks treatment he can alleviate it and give me remedies with which to heal myself.

Lucy had not the funds to enable her to remain with me, but she would take baby<sup>30</sup> home and take care of her.

On thinking over my funds I concluded I had barely enough to take me through the weeks treatment—If I waited I should not incur the expense of going again—If I went to Earl<sup>31</sup> I could not have treatment short of Chicago then it would be alone with a strange physician, for my sister could not leave her family to go with me and would consider it the greatest absurdity if she could. I remained supposing that my husband would be delighted to hear that there was so good a prospect of my being restored to sound health. The Dr. gave no more indication of sensual feeling or of thinking that he was doing anything indelicate than he would if he had been treating my face or my hand.

If he had shown passion, do you think so meanly of me as to believe that I could not and would not instantly have repulsed him and left for home? Why have you sought to humiliate your wife, and injure yourself by such dreadful suspicions as you have cast upon me. I was safe both because I could have detected the designs of a passionate man in the very beginning and defended myself, and because no physician of the character and standing of Dr. Saunders or indeed of any standing in the medical fraternity would compromise himself by offering insult to his patients, much less by overcoming them by brute force.

I am not safer walking the crowded street than I was in the Dr's office. Do you think I have no love of my own virtue, no pride, no temper or will of my own that you fancied me so helpless in his hands? The matter of going at bet. 7 & 8 o'clock in the evening is a mere bugaboo—I asked him if it would be as well for me to go in the afternoon and when he gave me the reasons why it would not I readily see the reasonableness of it—It was precisely this—he inserted a small piece of medicated sponge between the lip of the uterus and the rectum, the sponge to keep the uterus in position and the medicine upon it to cure the ulceration. He inserted one in the morning which I was to retain through the day till after tea when I withdrew it using my syringe and went to the office between 7 & 8 PM and had a fresh one put in which was to remain till the next morning—he had no office hour later than four, 4 PM until evening and that would have permitted the morning sponge to remain too short a time and the evening too long a time.

<sup>30</sup> The baby was Emma Alice Bryant, John and Emma's infant daughter.

<sup>31</sup> Emma's brother Irving in Toledo, Ohio.



He treated me twice a day simply because I could remain so short a time. His manner of treatment was perfectly delicate and such as all women afflicted with such disease and wishing to recover must receive at the hands of some male physician until there are sufficient educated female physicians to supersede [*sic*] the males.

I consider treatment at a physician's office if it is situated like Dr. Saunders as safer and therefore better than at a lady's home.

It is not customary among ladies to have anyone with them when treated—I know that Clarinda<sup>32</sup> told me years ago when she was under Dr. Getcher's care that she would not have any one but the Dr. present (that it added to her mortification). These ladies have told me the same thing. My character has been and is above suspicion and you would pity me if you knew how humiliated I feel to even explain to you. I resolved that I would not but hoping to restore you from your present state of insanity I have done it and I have written very fully meaning it to be the only and final vindication of my character on my part.

In regard to going out to church on Sunday night the Dr. had left the office when we returned and after waiting some little time for him Charlie<sup>33</sup> took me home and I missed treatment altogether for that night. To sum up—I have applied to a physician of skill and standing well known to sister Lucy for more than three years—and have received medical treatment precisely the same as thousands of pure women have done and are doing and my husband repays my full trust in him by torturing himself with the vilest suspicions of me—even inclining to the opinion that I am “ruined” or at the very least, injured—panic!

Taunts me with leaving my baby for a few days in care of her Grandma and aunty! Morally raises the lash over me and says “now will you obey? will you be my inferior, my obedient child?” To him I answer Never—I will be your true, loving wife, your companion and equal in every and the fullest sense—the mother of your children—nothing less and nothing else With a true love kiss for my husband—the man whom I married and have been happy with all these years—not the diseased imagination which has addressed these terrible letters to me, I am

Your loving wife, Emma

<sup>32</sup> It is not clear whether Clarinda is Emma's sister, sister-in-law, or an unrelated friend. Since Emma gives the doctor's name, presumably she expected John to know of him. If so, it would indicate that Dr. Getcher practiced in Georgia and that Clarinda was a Georgia friend.

<sup>33</sup> It is not fully clear who Charlie is. Emma mentions a Charlie Lewis, probably this same Charlie, in an earlier letter written from Cleveland and dated July 25, 1873. The context suggests she expects John to know of his mother, though not of Charlie himself.

August 7—At night

I have just received yours of last Saturday and Sunday and am more and more deeply wounded. What am I to suppose—that you believe me ruined by my own voluntary act, or that if I had been in any manner insulted by brute force you would lose your love for me and put me from you—which of the two terrible meanings must I put upon your words? Are you my husband, or are you some false spirit entered into him? Have you never thought that if my ruin had been compassed or attempted, I was as utterly wretched as you could possibly be? and yet you have not one word of love for me—of pity for me—your arms stretch out toward me, not in love, but in reproach and anger—To the wife who has never in all her married life received from any other man than you the lightest token of love or passion you can address these selfish unloving insulting words that you have written me. I cannot realize it—I am stupefied [*sic*] by it. You do not even call our baby by my name,<sup>34</sup> and yet you profess at the worst to fear that I have only been a helpless victim in the hands of a bad man. This utter lack of love for me—this perfection of selfishness is harder for me to bear than your insulting suspicions have been. Did you ever really love me, or did you only hold me as a possession tributary to your pleasure to be cast aside if you became displeased with it? If it were possible for you to do so I should entreat you to come to me immediately. Do you realize how cruelly you have stabbed me? Through all these terrible suspicions which you have entertained of me I have never been so heartbroken as I am to-night to think that if I had been in any way injured my husband would push me from him, reproaching me for the misery to himself without one single thought of my utter wretchedness—Through all these terrible things that you have written me I have never lost my love, never ceased to be sorry that you were in distress, but I have watched in vain for a single unselfish loving thought toward me. It is not you, it is not like you—write and tell me that some raving madness has possessed you and that you in your own proper self never wrote such things. If it were in my power I think I should start for Savannah to-morrow leaving baby here. I want to see you face to face.

Aug. 8 A.M. I have sent to Earlville for my letter. If I receive that on Monday or Tuesday I shall probably go to Earl on Wednesday—or rather

<sup>34</sup> The baby had been christened Emma Alice. As an adult she is referred to only as Alice, though Emma's letter here implies that she and John had often referred to the baby as Emma or as Emma Alice. It may be, though it is impossible to prove, that the lasting impact of this furious exchange between husband and wife was to shorten the baby's moniker permanently to Alice. What pain this might have caused Emma (the mother) can only be surmised.

leave him on Wed. morning—reach Swanton beyond Toledo after noon stop the night with my cousins there and go on to Chicago by the next forenoon train—I shall expect sister to meet me in Chicago.

In my present state of mind I would much prefer to go without stopping but I had before this terrible occurrence written to my cousin that I would visit her: and she writes me that she has lost her only sister and her brother (an only one) is lying with consumption—her mother is already dead, too, and she feels very lonely and depends much upon seeing her. [Author's note: Emma probably intended to write "me" instead of "her."] If my own heart is heavy I will not refuse to comfort another if in my power.

Our baby is well—has improved much since she came here in size, strength and talking. Mother has received yours of 4th. I probably shall wait a week or two longer instead of going to Earl on Wed.

[Letter 3]

Wakeman, Aug. 11, 1873  
Tuesday morning

My Darling Husband,

I went to the train this morning intending to go to Swanton to-day stop there to-night and go direct to Earl to-morrow but my plans have been again frustrated—just before starting I rec'd a note from cousin and in it she said that her children had had the scarlet fever one of them being sick with it a week ago when she expected me but that they were entirely well now and I need not fear to go—I was in a great dilemma about going there. On thinking the matter over decided to go and make my visit at the home of one of the other relations where I could see my cousin instead of at her own home—but on the way to the depot I began to wonder what sister would think about it and thought that she would perhaps feel uneasy about [it] if I did go, and so very reluctantly gave it up. I feel very badly in disappointing my cousin for her husband came out to meet me a week ago and will come again to-day. I did not feel that there was any more danger or I would not of course have decided to carry baby but I did not feel at liberty to do anything which might cause sister any uneasiness now, while I am a guest in her house.

I returned from the depot because this morning train would not only give me a very tiresome ride with baby but would force me to change cars in Chicago between 8 and 9 o'clock PM when baby is sleepy and tired, but very likely necessitate my remaining over night in Chicago.

So I intend now to take the sleeping car here at bet. 4 & 5 this afternoon and will reach Chicago to-morrow morning and probably reach sister at noon if not earlier.

I shall hope that we can stop a day with cousin when we return in October. I am very glad, very happy to be "your own darling wife" once more, to know that you do love me as warmly as ever

Now if I am your own darling wife let me ask you one favor. Dont come on in October expecting to talk over all this unhappiness through which we have passed. If we really and truly trust each other and love each other let us trust in that alone to take us safely through the future—a "platform" will be only a source of trouble, and writing is much safer than talking, because I at least have carefully considered every word that I have written you and all save the few lines sent in Lucy's have been kept over night and reread two or three times to be sure that I wrote nothing that I would ever need to recall, while if you try to talk with me when you come I may say something on the spur of the moment that I do not so fully mean. In the letters that I have written you I have shown my true self, so I say again, dont let us talk it over—If I think you come with that intention I shall even dread your coming, much as I wish to see you.

Write me please that it shall not be talked over, that we will taboo it as a subject of conversation, shall we not?

I do want to make you happy, my darling, and I mean to try by every means that I do not believe will be an injury to you and me—honestly I do not believe that we shall clash in our views in the future as much as we have done in the past in any case there is no appeal but mutual love and trust.

I think we can often see whether our requirements are just by the simple experiment of "put yourself in his place." I think I shall be ready to make any concession which you feel sure you could make if you were wife and I husband—where we differ upon any point suppose we mutually agree to put ourselves (mentally) in each others place, remembering.

[Author's note: Here Emma attached a portion of John's letter to her, to which she was responding. It reads: "If I had been enabled to carry out my purposes our family would have been disgraced for ever it is true; our little Alice would grow up, if she was permitted to live, with the iron driven deep into her soul, but even that was better than for me to go through life broken in spirit." Emma then continues.]

Please read the above very carefully and tell me if you are not shocked at the spirit of utter selfishness that pervades it—remember that our leader, Christ, died that the guilty might live—you would have thought it better to destroy the happiness of your family and that of the baby dearer than self to you than that your spirit should be broken—to let the innocent suffer that you might gratify hate and revenge. Please, dear husband, take

in the whole horribleness of this thing that you may see what an evil spirit you have permitted to creep into your heart and that you may seize him and throw him out so completely that he shall never dare lay wait and ensnare you again.

[Author's note: Here she attaches another portion of John's letter. It reads, "Let me tell you where your course will lead, if I consent; sooner or later to free love; just as in civil affairs the same tendency leads to the Commune, so in domestic affairs the freedom of the wife leads to free love"<sup>35</sup> Then Emma continues her commentary.]

Where does the "freedom" of the husband lead to? "Is it not a poor rule that will not work both ways" (I quote from your last letter.)

Aug 19 — A[M]

I have by mistake burned the sheet which I wished to enclose to you, speaking of the husband as absolute head over the wife using the parallel of church, government, nation, companies etc. It was apparently a very conclusive and satisfactory argument to you at the time, but I wished to give you the pleasure of re-reading it with these other paragraphs.

I have only to say in reply—if you value my love—if you wish to retain my respect—if you desire to remain my ideal of what is manly and noble and true, never use such words or sentiments to me again by letter or by word

You degrade yourself by them, and would degrade me if I received them. This sheet is my full, final answer to your letter by express—I will do anything, everything, in my power for your happiness my darling husband and, if I could, perhaps I would believe (for your happiness) black to be white, and a lie to be the truth, but unfortunately I can't. There are women so constituted that they can, but I am not thus constituted as you must have learned before we were married, so please do not urge impossibilities.

<sup>35</sup> For a thorough discussion of the significance of John's accusation, see *Lesjak* (n. 6 above), 15–17.

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Oppositional Imagination: Feminism, Critique, and Political Theory.** By *Joan Cocks*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989.

**Beyond Oppression: Feminist Theory and Political Strategy.** By *M. E. Hawkesworth*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 1990.

**Justice, Gender, and the Family.** By *Susan Moller Okin*. New York: Basic Books, 1989.

*Joan B. Landes*    Hampshire College

**A**LTHOUGH AFTER TWENTY years women's studies is firmly established in the academy, there exists a state of uneven development among the disciplines. While feminist political theorists have challenged their discipline's gender bias, they have not had the same measure of success as feminist scholars in literature or history (to cite two more congenial examples). Likewise, the feminist agenda has yet to succeed in the larger world of public affairs. These three books are part of a continuing effort to bring feminist discourse and objectives to center stage in the study and practice of politics. For both Okin and Hawkesworth, the challenge is to make feminist theory directly relevant to the struggle to reshape national political priorities; whereas for Cocks, theory plays its role best when it maintains a "partial distance from life" (1). By exploring the bases for gender equality in family life, the political domain, and erotic existence, these authors present contrasting perspectives on the time-honored question, "What is to be done?"

In *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, Susan Moller Okin argues that without a just family it will not be possible to produce citizens with a strong sense of justice. Extrapolating from the work of feminist psychologists and economists, she advocates the equal sharing of paid and unpaid work among men and women. As in her earlier book, *Women in Western Political Thought*, Okin criticizes leading male theorists for a pattern of gender neglect—although this time she focuses not on dead luminaries but on contemporary theorists of social justice. She faults them for assuming the existence of a traditional, gender-structured family and for employing gender-neutral language in a hollow way. Admonish-

Permission to reprint a book review printed in this section may be obtained only from the author.

ing feminists who characterize justice and rights as masculinist thinking, Okin proposes to overcome the divide between the moralities of rights and care. She calls for an ethic that attends to "everyone's" point of view, not some abstract "view from nowhere" (15).

Okin's impatience with libertarians like Robert Nozick is to be expected. Even more revealing is her discussion of the communitarian critics of John Rawls's liberal theory of justice (Michael Sandel, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and Michael Walzer). In one of the book's strongest chapters, Okin powerfully demonstrates the perils for feminists of allying with communitarian theories that conceal traditional gender arrangements. Still, Okin does not address directly whether women's commitment to the family may itself be another ideological or cultural effect of these same arrangements. She observes that "in a *gender-structured society* there is such a thing as the distinct standpoint of women" that can be ignored only at our peril (106). Beyond that, however, "a just future would be one without gender" (171). Presumably, the family will survive, but not as a gender-structured institution.

Although she faults Rawls for failing to articulate consistently the requirements of justice within the family, Okin's sympathies are with his notion of justice as fairness. She extends her challenge to the public/domestic dichotomy, first by way of the ideas of Michael Walzer and Roberto Unger, next by surveying the empirical literature to establish women's and children's vulnerability under gendered marriage patterns. Okin would grant husbands and wives equal legal entitlement to all household earnings. Like the "wages for housework" advocates of the early 1970s who are not here discussed, she believes that unpaid work in the home would achieve greater public recognition if employers were required to issue two wage checks (to the earner and his or her partner).

Regrettably, the writings of feminist theorists of justice appear only in the interstices of Okin's main argument with the men. Yet, if "the critique of the family that is missing [in Unger] has since been provided by feminist legal theorists influenced by the critical legal studies movement," why does Okin choose to rehearse Unger's work instead of theirs (118–19)? Okin herself hints at the answer when she submits that the mainstream has virtually ignored feminism. One hopes Okin's work will draw the response it deserves from her male peers. But insofar as she rests her case on factual documentation, she risks being dismissed by theorists outside the legal realist tradition for whom facts and circumstances are deemed inconsequential. Also, one wonders whether a feminist Rawlsian strategy in 1990s America will fare better than its predecessor of the 1980s; and if so, why? Okin deserves strong praise for grappling with how to adjudicate between a theory of rights and a commitment to difference. Oddly, however, she regards gender as a "preliberal relic"—a

residue or analogue of either feudalism or the caste system—that will be eradicated once one's sex bears no marked consequence for parenting, work, or political life (122). But this perspective defies the historical evidence, especially in the United States where liberal society has accommodated itself well to gender arrangements. She concludes by sketching the kinds of legal protections that are required for the present victims of gender inequality and prompts readers to consider whether a time will come when all persons will exhibit a greater empathy for difference yet gender difference will have ceased to matter.

In *Beyond Oppression: Feminist Theory and Political Strategy*, M. E. Hawkesworth exhorts feminist theorists to take a more pragmatic approach to political change. She identifies constituencies for what might become a movement for gender reform in Bush's America. However, her first priority is to defend the feminist project against its strong detractors. Thus, *Beyond Oppression* presents a synthesis of recent feminist theory for new students and for those who need convincing of its usefulness and intellectual validity. In her initial summary of the Western tradition, from Plato to Derrida, she is concerned with establishing gender difference, but risks losing important distinctions and historical nuances among these theorists. Likewise, she assembles evidence of sexual discrimination in contemporary society but glosses over exactly how these circumstances are "the social consequence of gender misconceptions in Western thought" (47).

From the feminist literature, Hawkesworth extrapolates four types of explanations for women's oppression: arguments for biology, physical force, the sexual division of labor, and psychology. She also identifies four rhetorical strategies—of oppression, difference, reason, and vision—deployed by feminists from divergent theoretical backgrounds. Thus, the American feminists Nancy Chodorow and Jean Elshtain are treated alongside French feminists Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva as proponents of a rhetoric of difference. Readers will begin to detect here Hawkesworth's special impatience with the French discussions of sexuality and language. After accusing these writers of intellectual elitism, however, Hawkesworth attempts a difficult application of Hayden White's theory of tropology, by whose logic, she observes, "there is a language-driven progression in feminist rhetoric" (126). In her model, the rhetoric of vision or "postmodern consciousness emerges as the *telos*" of a necessary dialectical progression (127).

Hawkesworth worries that postmodernism has reduced feminism to nothing but discourse. More persuasively, she investigates theory's relationship to truth claims, counterposing postmodernism to feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint theories. Following a fine synthesis of the epistemological implications of these separate stances, Hawkesworth sets forth her appreciation and reservations for postmodernist interven-



tions inside feminism. She insists that feminist positions necessarily involve a starting point and a set of commitments that are not ultimately reconcilable with postmodern relativism. Significantly, for Hawkesworth the world is more than a text. "A critical feminist epistemology must avoid both the foundationalist tendency to reduce the multiplicity of reasons to a monolithic 'Reason' and the postmodernist tendency to reject all reasons *tout court*" (147).

Subsequently, Hawkesworth exposes the extent to which classical formulations of virtue and visions of an ideal political community have infiltrated feminist discourse. In lieu of abstract and potentially repressive utopianism, she advances a constitutional prescription whereby women would hold 50 percent of all elective, appointive, and bureaucratic offices. Addressing critics, Hawkesworth claims this would achieve a procedural version of sexual equality, not a substantive one. She does not anticipate that women will share the same outlook, though she does argue that sex parity will subtly affect tacit assumptions about women's social role and have a benign effect on public policy. These optimistic goals will certainly generate controversy, not least over whether this proposal can redress the fortunes of the most disadvantaged and minority women in America. By opening the door to constitutionally mandated "descriptive representation" (181) for all minorities, nationalities, and oppressed groups, she introduces the prospect of intensified conflicts over race, class, regional, sexual, or religious identity and of torn allegiances among individuals who find themselves inside more than one subcategory of the populace. One wonders why Hawkesworth did not consider the recent National Organization for Women resolution to create a women's party as an alternative to constitutional change. And what would happen if there were a demographic shift so that women became 49 percent of the population? Could men insist on male sex parity? This is a book with a very complex agenda. Surely, some readers will be drawn to the able discussion of feminist epistemology; others will go to the section on practical reform. Hawkesworth is to be commended for trying to encompass so much ground. It remains to be seen whether political pragmatists will be persuaded by the need to wrestle with theory, theorists will want to debate the tactics of political reform, and misogynists will attempt to see the virtues of feminist scholarship.

In *The Oppositional Imagination: Feminism, Critique and Political Theory*, Joan Cocks proposes to join "the most abstract and idealist kind of theory . . . to the most mundane and bodily aspects of actual life and to the most politically committed practices of resistance" (2). This is a beautifully written, thought-provoking study of radical feminism—the countercultural formation that has risen up against the regime of masculine/feminine, a specific cultural order that rules over the sexed

body. Cocks discusses the ideas of leading radical feminist "organic intellectuals"—spokespersons and activist writers such as Adrienne Rich, Mary Daly, Susan Griffin, Kathleen Barry, Andrea Dworkin, and Catharine MacKinnon—who have informed the practice of women's culture and women's community. She is mindful that radical feminism is a great deal more than theory alone; it involves communal institutions and networks, cultural prohibitions, and colloquial routines of thought. Cocks subjects this entire constellation to a searching set of questions with considerable respect for the militance, courage, and illuminating insights of radical feminist activists. While she responds to the power of radical feminist rhetoric, its "poetry and polemics," she pleads for more.

Cocks is an unabashed advocate of critical theory. Her particular blend of theory embraces Marxism, analytical philosophy, poststructuralism, and postcolonial criticism—but not psychoanalysis, an omission that some may find a serious shortcoming in a project so determinately about gender and sexuality. Cocks defends her choice not as incompatible with psychoanalysis but as laying more emphasis on the political, hence disciplinary, grids through which sexual power is exercised and resisted in the domain of the human body. Cocks optimistically looks toward a possible merger between critical theory and radical feminism. For this to happen, radical feminists would have to relax their resistance to established, "male" ways of understanding and their privileged stance toward "women's experience" as some sanctified, truth-producing zone.

Cocks makes an elegant case for the relevance of critical philosophy that recognizes the processes by which everyday consciousness congeals into a living culture wherein dominant class and gender relations are reproduced. She appreciates that hegemonic power emanates from a variety of sites, not just the state; that it is positive and educative as well as negative and repressive; that its medium is discourse, not guns. Cocks explores how pessimism may turn into self-conscious resistance to a dominant order. Emboldened by her conviction that (abstract) theory can approach the palpable and concrete levels of existence by "conjuring up an imaginary figure or scene," Cocks turns to the challenge of investigating the masculine/feminine regime and its critics (110).

Cocks objects to what she believes to be radical feminism's theoretical manicheism; its instrumentalism; its notions of virtue, truth, and intentionality; and its repudiation of heterosexual encounters. In a move very similar to lesbian sadomasochist readings of radical feminist portraits of female desire, Cocks constructs four dramas of heterosexual eroticism at odds with radical feminist dictations for female sexuality. She poses alternatives to both hegemonic male and radical feminist versions of female desire. She seeks as well to explore the possibilities for free sensuality within a phallogentric regime. For Cocks, "even if male

sexuality *were* inevitably aggressive and invasive, that does not make it the author or director of female desire in the heterosexual plot" (158). Moreover, since brute flesh signifies nothing in particular, "commanding and succumbing in love have fundamentally to do with a dialectic of will" (168). The book concludes with a forceful plea for a theoretically engaged but not depoliticized radical movement.

In contrast to Okin and Hawkesworth, Cocks offers a less hopeful scenario for "What is to be done?" In part, it is the nature of her subject: surely the alteration of patterns of eroticism poses an even greater challenge than the reform of family or political life—as difficult as that may be. In addition, Cocks writes from inside a tradition that values critique over practical formulations, as emblemized by the familiar image of critical theory as "gadfly" that graces her final sentence. Indeed, she calls into question the established conventions of critical theory itself. Like Hawkesworth's visionaries, Cocks deploys fictions; but she knows how to argue as well. She dares to upset her theoretical allies by writing theory *about* bodies and sexuality in a rather explicit manner. She risks alienating feminists by her forthright critique of radical feminist presuppositions, worse yet from the standpoint of "male theory." In the process, she challenges feminists to come up with less predictable ways of writing political theory.

---

**Marriage and Inequality in Classless Societies.** By Jane Fishburne Collier. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988.

**The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia.** By Marilyn Strathern. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

Ernestine L. McHugh University of California, San Diego, and Pitzer College

IN RECENT YEARS, two books centering on feminist concerns have generated controversy, questioning, and fruitful discussion among anthropologists. These are Marilyn Strathern's *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* and Jane Fishburne Collier's *Marriage and Inequality in Classless Societies*. Each is an ambitious project, broadly comparative and directed toward fundamental questions about gender and social life. The two books contrast in aim and in area and complement each another intellectually. Collier examines the particularities of power relations by

investigating the basis of marriage exchange among Native Americans; Strathern looks broadly at concepts that condition ways of seeing and relating in Melanesia.

*The Gender of the Gift* can be seen as a book of metaphors: the figures according to which Melanesians construct social life, particularly gender relations, are illuminated; analysis as such is conceived as a "trope for the representation of knowledge" (18)—a matter of style, a convenient plot line. Strathern's concern with the play and interplay of figures is not frivolous. This is a deeply serious book—tantalizing, difficult, and intellectually powerful. It challenges both Western constructions of gender relations, which are tied to control and proprietorship, and the holistic conception of society, which according to the author creates a false sense of coherence, greatly limiting the perspective of social science. Strathern's agenda is a dual one. She gives an account of the cultural construction of social life in Melanesia and turns a critical lens on the act of analysis itself.

*The Gender of the Gift* is fundamentally a theoretical exploration, although discussion of ethnography from Melanesia (including the author's own work in the New Guinea Highlands) is interwoven throughout. After two introductory chapters that situate her work in relation to anthropology and feminism, Strathern builds her argument in reference to the Melanesian material. She examines Western constructions and Melanesian images of male-female relations; social domains; knowledge, power, and ritual; productive activity; the exchange of gifts; and the creation of kinship through the exchange and procreation of persons. The book is broad in scope, and its ethnographic range is impressive.

There are problems in the argument in that although Strathern proposes to represent a Melanesian point of view, what she offers is a series of exogenous analyses of symbols and acts. She draws on the work of a number of ethnographers, all with differing theoretical agendas; her own intellectual project, of course, determines the selection of the ethnographies. Because the Melanesian material is filtered through so many analytic lenses, it is often difficult to feel that one has truly engaged a Melanesian idiom or perspective.

Nonetheless, the book is continually provocative. Strathern deconstructs what she sees as Western hegemonic concepts that have determined and distorted the representation of others and subtly created ideologies through their framing of social life. She brings under scrutiny such antimonies as nature versus culture, private versus public, and domestic versus political, showing how the delineation of domains is inherently evaluative and misrepresents Melanesian experience. In analyzing the Melanesian material, she discusses the "givens" of social life in more differentiated and complex terms than the usual categories allow, thus

demonstrating a range of possibilities in the construction of social worlds.

As well as questioning conventional dualities, Strathern criticizes presumptions about natural categories, rejecting the idea of the individual as an entity and the concept that gender identities are biologically given rather than culturally conceived. Her own notions of person and gender, forged in reference to the Melanesian material, are much more fluid and situationally defined than the conventional Western concepts she criticizes.

*The Gender of the Gift* is challenging to read, less from gratuitous complexity than because the ideas themselves require a new conceptual vocabulary, which must be assembled as one encounters the argument. The challenge is fruitful: the familiar becomes novel and so compels critical examination. But the core of the argument is problematic: cultural images seem to account for social forms, and (the individual having been denied) there appears to be no locus of experience. I am left with the sense that gender, the person, and life in the world are all overly disembodied in Strathern's account, in which everything is a convergence of images and even the sexual act is a "perspective" or "viewpoint."

*The Gender of the Gift* itself is perhaps best appreciated as a perspective on gender and social life rather than a representation of experience. Strathern's ethnography, which is thorough and fine-grained, is more accessible elsewhere, but the scope of this comparative endeavor offers a rich and original way of seeing gender and human relations in general. It is an argument that one sees *through*, in the best sense.

Jane Fishburne Collier's *Marriage and Inequality in Classless Societies* is a lucid discussion of the congruence between types of marriage exchange and ways of organizing status and power. Rather than challenging categories as Strathern does, Collier builds models for understanding power relations. Her aim is to construct typologies that enable understanding of patterns and processes across societies. Although the ideal-types she maps out are meant to apply beyond them, Collier's discussion focuses on Native American groups: the Comanche, the Cheyenne, and the Kiowa.

The book is clearly organized. Each section addresses the characteristics of societies that fit a given marriage exchange model. (The types of exchange considered are brideservice, equal bridewealth, and unequal bridewealth.) Collier examines systematically the means by which marriages are negotiated; the organization of production, exchange, and status; perceptions of and responses to conflict; and symbolic representations of gender, personhood, and the cosmological order. Her examination reveals certain regularities, including the preoccupations of people within each type of society.

As a work of feminist anthropology, *Marriage and Inequality in Classless Societies* is curiously androcentric. Marriages are represented as ne-

gotiated between men, and status and its attainment are defined from the male point of view. Collier's analysis is based on secondary sources, some of them older ethnographies. Had the ethnographic material been collected with a stronger feminist orientation, we might have caught glimpses of women's subordinate ideologies and backstage negotiations, which could form an interesting counterpoint to the dominant perspective of male informants.

However, the central question of the book is, "How do we understand inequality?" While women collude and collaborate with men in supporting certain forms of inequality, differences in privilege, prestige, and access to resources are most often formally regulated by men. Seen in this light, Collier's androcentric account is not inappropriate.

Toward the end of the book, the argument coalesces in a discussion of theoretical perspectives on inequality. The ethnography that precedes the discussion provides a useful base for engaging the perspectives of the social theorists considered, and Collier persuasively demonstrates the mutually reinforcing relationship of rank and values in constituting and preserving relations of inequality.

In conclusion, Collier addresses the issue of comparison and argues eloquently for the value of comparison in general and the usefulness of typologies in particular. She maintains that ideal-typical models offer a way of comparing social wholes and, thus, of understanding women's lives within particular kinds of systems and comparing them across cultures.

The two books considered here point up the benefits and drawbacks of the comparative method. Ambitious and explicit comparison in anthropology is rare because of a longstanding emphasis on meaning and context and because of a distaste for early comparative frameworks that were overly general and sometimes denigrating to those they included. Comparative studies are easily faulted because analysis across cultures requires greater simplification than does examination of a single society, so inevitably features of social life are muted, distorted, or left out. Comparison also risks losing sight of the personal agency, intention, and inventiveness that, while describable in abstract and general terms, are represented most convincingly in ethnographic accounts focusing on situated human actors. The broad scope of comparative studies does, nevertheless, provide valuable opportunities for dialogue and for the exploration of far-reaching questions.

As Strathern points out, one of the characteristics of feminist scholarship is its multivocality; the consensus is not on scholarly method or theoretical direction but on rigor and concern for understanding women's lives and conditions. The books considered here each further that project and offer sustaining food for thought.

**Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States.** By *Lori D. Ginzberg*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990.

**Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: A State and the Nation.** By *Donald G. Mathews* and *Jane Sherron De Hart*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

**Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880.** By *Mary P. Ryan*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

**Women, Politics, and Change.** Edited by *Louise A. Tilly* and *Patricia Gurm*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1990.

*Lisa J. Disch* University of Minnesota

FEMINIST SCHOLARS are engaged in an ongoing conversation about the meaning of gender difference. Are references to distinctively female strengths, activities, and problems remnants of sexual prejudice, or is the notion of women's distinctiveness a critical standpoint that offers feminists leverage for social change? As Martha Minow has argued, in a sexually hierarchal society the language of difference is all too easily appropriated to breathe new life into old stereotypes; yet the practice of treating men and women the same without regard to historical and structural inequities has economic, social, and political consequences that are patently unfair.<sup>1</sup> Conceived as either a natural or a social attribute of individuals, it seems that difference does lend itself to stereotypic thinking. Treated as a consequence of relationships among social actors in a specific political context, however, gender difference opens a way to examine the distribution of power not simply between men and women, but also across society as a whole.

Three of these books ask what difference means as a relationship among different social groups in the context of specific political struggles. They also examine how difference structures political strategies for various public actors. The fourth book is an interdisciplinary volume of essays that looks at changes in women's political activity in the context of broader social transformation.

*Women and the Work of Benevolence* is a beautifully written, theoretically rich study of benevolence work in three phases over the

<sup>1</sup> See Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion and American Law* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990).

nineteenth century. Lori Ginzberg examines the ways that the attribute "feminine virtue" accorded conservative women of privilege the latitude to participate in the development of a class-stratified society. She argues that benevolent work changed from an activity perceived to require distinctively feminine virtues to a rationalized, professional discipline modeled after the military. Changes in benevolence work and the images of gender through which it was represented "were vehicles for the emergence of a new middle-class identity," and "changes in that work and rhetoric signaled an important transformation in that class's culture and politics" (7).

In the first phase of benevolence work, the ideology of feminine altruism masked the political influence, class privilege, and authority that benevolent women exercised both with respect to men and to the women they "helped." Benevolence was a business involving management of personnel, negotiation with local political officials, and transactions with capital and property. Nowhere was the discrepancy between gender ideology and the work of benevolence more evident than in the incorporation of benevolent societies that enabled married women, legally denied political and property rights, to exercise powers under the fiction of "a legal 'person' who was, for all practical purposes, not female" (50). Incorporation brought the connection of class and gender to light, as corporate charters were granted "to benevolent societies run by prosperous women whose goals conformed to a traditional charitable framework and whose organizational needs included protecting significant financial resources" (53). Incorporation hid the fact that "women's separate sphere" was not separate at all. Instead, the ideology of female benevolence constructed femininity in a way that provided leverage for social agency to privileged women who did not challenge the basic structure of social institutions—except, paradoxically, that of gender itself.

It was during the Civil War and in its aftermath that the work of benevolence had its most dramatic transformation, assimilated both to political practices, such as electoral politics, that are dominated by men, and to virtues associated with masculinity: "Increasingly, male values were viewed as necessary to control and limit a female effusion of emotion, sensibility, or passion; either those sensibilities would submit to law and system or they would become entirely ineffective, even dangerous" (173). Ginzberg explains this transformation from the perspective of the new generation of women activists who participated in it and within the context of the increasingly rationalized, middle-class society in which they operated. Women who came of age disenfranchised in an era of electoral politics would understandably accept the redefinition of female power in terms of values associated with masculinity. And in the emerg-



ing modern industrial world, it is not surprising that benevolent work should be couched in terms of "nationalism, discipline, centralization, and, above all, efficiency" (133).

In her conclusion, Ginzberg suggests a parallel between the rejection of feminist politics by daughters of the feminist movement in the past and in the present: "As was the case one hundred years ago, the adherents of this view adopt liberal categories—equality under the law, moderate social reform, and individual achievement—to express their analysis of social ills as well as their own class identity" (217). Ginzberg puts the so-called feminist backlash, which is often attributed to the reemergence of deep-seated feminine needs, into the context of a critical understanding of broader social change.

In *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA*, Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart tell the story of the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in South Carolina. Like Ginzberg, Mathews and De Hart take a debate that appears to be about gender identity and explain it in terms of the political and social environment in which it occurred, rather than in terms of the psychology of the individual actors.

The authors advance two principal arguments. First, they attribute the failure of the ERA to its proponents' inability to challenge unexamined beliefs about the relationship between sex and gender. Opponents of the amendment feared that the ERA called for "desexegration," which—as was feared with civil rights legislation—would give the courts undue power to interfere in private lives (171). In the absence of meaningful public debate about the distinction between sex and gender, opponents remained convinced that traditional gender roles were natural and "that there was a coercive element in ERA which neither they nor their children could successfully withstand" (219).

Borrowing theoretically from Joan Scott, Mathews and De Hart argue that proponents of the amendment implicitly defined gender as "the meaning our society and culture attaches to sexual differences" (xii).<sup>2</sup> For these women, who understood gender to be a negotiated identity rather than a natural one, the ERA did not mean a call for mandatory sexual integration; rather, it meant women would "be free to determine for themselves what sex—that is, gender—meant" (129). In the absence of meaningful public discussion of the relationship between sex and gender, however, they were unable to represent the ERA as liberating rather than coercive.

Second, the authors argue that the ERA failed because its proponents' demands for equality before the law were perceived by opponents as a

<sup>2</sup> See Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). This essay first appeared in 1985.

demand for gender sameness. Working-class women, well acquainted with the difficulties of achieving equality in a world constructed on men's terms, had good cause to resist the amendment: "The appeal to individual rights and individual self-fulfillment was especially troubling to anti-ERA women because of their understanding of women's capacity to function competitively in a male-dominated society and that understanding did not make rights emancipatory" (219).

Mathews and De Hart argue that presuppositions about the meaning of equality and the connections among sex, gender, and personal identity constricted debate over the ERA so that it was never clear how women's liberation would differ from "freedom" to compete for success on men's terms. The authors go beyond the evidence they present with their claim that the working-class skeptics "grasped intuitively the same deficiency that feminist scholars argue characterizes liberal ideology" (220). Nonetheless, a strength of this book is its authors' refusal to reduce women's opposition to the ERA to any of a number of popular and sexist theories about women's "fear of success" or "flight from independence." This study is interesting because Mathews and De Hart use the failure of the ERA to examine weaknesses in the liberal democratic conception of equality and in the quality of public discourse in a liberal democratic society.

Mary Ryan's *Women in Public* exemplifies an emerging thread in feminist research: the convergence of feminist and democratic theory. Ryan's objectives are to reject the treatment of gender as a social attribute in the dichotomous opposition of public man to private woman, and to give historical meaning to the elusive term "public space." She brings these two aims together by searching for women in public. For Ryan as for Ginzberg, the study of women as agents requires a conception of politics broader than elections and government institutions; Ryan's two-fold research problem suggests that the study of women's activities enriches the meaning of the abstraction "public life." Just as a more democratic conception of politics makes women visible in public, so do women's activities begin to give "public space" historical specificity and social content.

Each of the essays in this volume looks at women in four dimensions of public life from 1825 to 1880: public ceremonies, public spaces, sexual politics, and public opinion. The study of women from these public reference points underscores the impossibility of generalizing about women; the class and gender biases in the public sphere reveal the discrepancy between the ideally rational and universal republican polity and its socially differentiated historical embodiment.

In the essay on public space, for example, Ryan argues that the simple distinction between public man and private woman obscures the expe-

rience of daily life in the mid-nineteenth-century city, where men and women both appeared in public. Yet it is not the loss of the public-private distinction but the confusion of class boundaries that is a greater threat to social order at this time. During this period two images of public women, the dangerous woman or prostitute and the endangered woman or lady, are deployed to settle class and ethnic boundaries in a heterogeneous public space. That the dangerous woman was seen to pose a moral threat to both genders "inadvertently exposed the ambiguities of gender identity and the arbitrariness of gender dualism" (73). Ryan's argument complements Ginzberg's. Where Ginzberg argues that the discrepancy between the ideology of female virtue and the work of benevolence exposes the similarities between men's and women's capacities, Ryan argues that the differences among women in public underscore the class specificity of the womanly ideal.

While Ryan succeeds in deconstructing the opposition of public man/private woman, she is less successful in the constructive aspect of her project: to "actually locate the public" itself (12). Ryan argues persuasively that gender ideology marks both social and sexual difference and that, consequently, "gender was not a social category that automatically or immediately translated into a common identity or united politics for women" (94). The meaning of "women in public," however, remains elusive. In the first two essays, Ryan sidesteps the question by designating women's ceremonies and women's spaces "semi-public." In the third essay, where Ryan examines the regulation of women's sexuality, she begins to talk about "gender politics" without explicitly stating the relationship between the "public" and the "political." Finally, Ryan argues in the last essay that women used protest to find "access to a universe of public discourse that resembled, in always imperfect and ever-changing ways, the ideal of the public sphere" (132). Her conception of public life would be enriched by a more precise consideration of the difference between protest and other modes of public discourse, as well as of the power relationships that move a group to speak in one mode rather than another.

The interdisciplinary essays in *Women, Politics, and Change* build toward an expanded definition of politics, challenging the social science disciplines to conceive of politics in ways that do not erase women and challenging feminism to be more inclusive. Most of the contributors take care to explain how women's politics have changed in response to the growth of the state apparatus and of the capitalist industrial economy. Essays are grouped by different conceptions of politics: protopolitics, electoral politics, voluntarism, and gender politics. The section on protopolitics is the most successful; it contributes the most toward an ex-

panded definition of politics that captures women's activities, and it uses interdisciplinarity to its best advantage with essays that refute and respond to one another from different perspectives.

Focusing on voluntary associations, the protopolitics essays debate whether difference is a ground for "women's culture" or a source of class and race conflict among women. By "protopolitics," the authors mean activity that exists outside formal political structures. Moved by concerns from everyday life, it can be expressed in directly political acts such as protest or can give rise to associations with no explicit political goals.

Suzanne Lebsock's essay, "Women and American Politics, 1880–1920," touches off the debate over difference with an overview of women's political activity in voluntary associations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, women's clubs, settlement houses, and trade unions. This activity, she argues, both constituted a distinctive "women's political culture" and helped to shift the U.S. political system from mass politics to interest group politics (37). In her study of conflicts between middle-class and immigrant working-class women activists in Tampa, Nancy A. Hewitt argues that no distinctively women's culture existed. Not only was women's culture in Tampa fractured by class interest, but women in different class positions disagreed about the nature of politics. The myth of benevolence cloaked the class interests behind privileged women's organizing, while working-class women's participation in labor activism "made their material interests more starkly visible" (80). Jacqueline Jones's "Political Implications of Black and White Women's Work in the South, 1890–1965" suggests that parallel women's cultures existed between black and white women's activist groups. Though these women shared a commitment to issues of child welfare and family policy, they were divided by the broader social context of Southern racism.

This volume works better as a point of entrance into current debates than as an introduction to feminist thought. In some cases, however, the essays reiterate old arguments or pose research problems in a way that appears uninformed by contemporary feminist scholarship. One essay in the electoral politics section, for example, asserts that women's political disunity can be attributed to differences over values that "go back in large part, if not completely, to political socialization in earlier life" (273). This statement sits uneasily after the careful exploration of women's culture in the opening section. In this instance interdisciplinarity, which fostered conversation in the section on protopolitics, serves only to highlight the uneven progress of feminist scholarship through different subdisciplines in the social sciences.

**Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women.** By *Claudia Dale Goldin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

**Job Queues, Gender Queues: Explaining Women's Inroads into Male Occupations.** By *Barbara F. Reskin* and *Patricia A. Roos*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

**Doing Comparable Worth: Gender, Class and Pay Equity.** By *Joan Acker*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.

*Nancy Folbre* University of Massachusetts

THESE THREE BOOKS differ considerably in methodology and style. Claudia Goldin's *Understanding the Gender Gap* is the most ambitious and the most technical, exploring trends in relative earnings in the United States since the early nineteenth century and testing specific hypotheses regarding earnings trajectories with cross-sectional data. In *Job Queues, Gender Queues*, Barbara F. Reskin and Patricia A. Roos focus more narrowly on changes in occupational structure in the United States between 1970 and 1980, using detailed case studies to support their claim that discrimination persists. In *Doing Comparable Worth*, Joan Acker strikes a more informal tone, combining a critical analysis of job evaluation methods with a personal account of Oregon's partial implementation of pay equity for state employees.

Many of these differences prove complementary. Each book represents its genre well and contributes to our larger understanding of gender inequality in the workplace. Together, the books testify to the emergence of a distinctive feminist paradigm that emphasizes the importance of forms of collective identity and action based on gender. Yet their juxtaposition also highlights time-honored questions that remain largely unanswered. Under what conditions does labor market competition undermine discrimination? How significant are conscious forms of discrimination relative to the more implicit cultural devaluation of female job characteristics?

*Understanding the Gender Gap*, the most methodologically conservative, is also the most optimistic. Goldin offers ample evidence in support of her principal claim, that the gender gap in earnings has diminished over time. Feminists have long brandished the discouraging fact that the ratio of women's earnings to men's (among full-time year-round workers) remained virtually constant at about 60 percent between 1950 and 1980. Goldin shows that this stagnation was preceded by a period of

considerable improvement, from about 46 percent in 1890 to about 56 percent in 1930. Gains in women's relative wages in some sectors resulted from early industrialization in the 1830s. Further, some evidence suggests that occupational segregation has declined since 1900.

Goldin is careful not to exaggerate these gains, however, and to point out countervailing tendencies such as increases in the percentage of families maintained by women alone. Her balance here reflects her larger effort to compromise between highly stylized economic models of competitive markets (which generally have predicted progress against discrimination) and more interdisciplinary approaches attentive to political power and social norms (which generally have predicted resistance to change). The resulting theoretical tension complicates the narrative and generates some troubling inconsistencies.

The organization of the chapters exemplifies a certain theoretical ambivalence. Chapters 2–5 are devoted largely to quantitative description and analysis, including estimates of labor supply functions for the 1890–1980 period. The later chapters, titled “Why Did Change Take So Long?” and “The Political Economy of Gender,” reexamine the same time period, describing institutional forms of discrimination such as protective legislation and bars against the employment of married women. Some sections explore the interplay between these and more easily quantifiable factors, suggesting, for instance, that institutional factors amplified the impact of changes in the demand for women's labor in later years. What's missing is any close consideration of the ways institutional discrimination may have biased all the estimates of supply and demand elasticities.

At points, Goldin acknowledges the circularity in standard human capital models that explain earnings as a reward for education and experience. She relays Helen Sumner's classic observation, voiced in 1910, that earnings determined length of experience, rather than vice versa: “In most cases, probably, woman's expectation of marriage is responsible for her lack of skill, but in some instances, doubtless, her enforced lack of skill is responsible for her longing for marriage as a relief from intolerable drudgery” (95). Yet elsewhere, Goldin measures “wage discrimination” (which she herself puts in quotes) as “the portion of the difference between male and female earnings that cannot be explained by differences in their productive attributes” (233, n. 3). Wait a minute—by her own account, these very differences in attributes (such as experience) reflect discrimination.

Goldin's stubborn affection for human capital models is most apparent in chapter 4, where she argues that wage discrimination did not emerge until the 1900–1940 period, when competitive labor markets were attenuated by the development of bureaucratic personnel policies and internal labor markets as firms sought to discourage labor turnover.

While the gender gap in earnings was larger in the earlier period, Goldin argues that a significant portion of this difference reflected men's superior physical strength. With the growth of service sector jobs in which strength was less important, women were able to compete more effectively with men. Unfortunately, they found themselves hampered at this stage by institutionalized discrimination.

Was physical strength a major determinant of nineteenth-century pay differentials? The evidence Goldin offers is not completely convincing. Nor is it obvious that competitive labor markets made institutionalized discrimination difficult. As Alice Kessler-Harris persuasively argues in her recent book *A Woman's Wage*, the labor market itself was a social institution, mediated by social norms.<sup>1</sup> Employers adhered to the concepts of a male "family wage" and "appropriate work for women" despite their impact on labor costs.

While Goldin is also attentive to the role of social norms, she often describes these as a reflection of consensus rather than an object of struggle.<sup>2</sup> She slights the early history of the feminist movement, commenting that it represented the views of a small minority. Perhaps so, but early feminist activities dissented from, agitated against, and probably weakened at least some of the social norms that legitimated restrictions on women's economic activities. In doing so, they increased both the supply of and the demand for women workers outside the home (and therefore affected price elasticities!).

Reskin and Roos do not share Goldin's confidence in the combination of market processes and evolving social norms. They place more emphasis on the strategic aspects of gender conflict in the workplace, arguing that apparent improvements in women's occupational mobility overstate their actual gains. Their book includes case studies of eleven different occupations by ten scholars who worked in concert, their results unified not only by a common methodology but also by extremely clear introductory and concluding chapters. The end result is an analysis broader than any two authors could provide individually, but far more cohesive than an edited volume.

The book's title conveys its general theoretical perspective, a dual emphasis on labor queues that order groups of workers in terms of their attractiveness to employers, and job queues that rank jobs in terms of their attractiveness to workers. Changes in both queues help explain

<sup>1</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990). [Editors' note: A review of this book may be found elsewhere in this issue.]

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Goldin writes, "Social consensus had been formed on the necessity for married women to remain at home with their children and on the need for their husbands to support them" (6).

occupational change. Between 1970 and 1980, men's reluctance to hire women for certain jobs was often eroded by a growing scarcity of male labor; women also began to line up more assertively for better paying jobs. Policies enforcing affirmative action and contesting sexual harassment speeded up desegregation in some occupations more than in others, their impact often diminished by male-dominated unions.

The individual case studies lend a rich texture to this book, making it far more compelling than a purely quantitative analysis. All of the chosen occupations, ranging from book editing to real estate sales to baking and typesetting, experienced particularly rapid entry of women workers between 1970 and 1980. Most also underwent significant changes in the technology or organization of work, often associated with what the authors term "deskilling." In no case did genuine integration take place. Often, an occupation switched from predominantly male to predominantly female, or women were "ghettoized" in less well paying jobs within the occupation. In other words, occupational segregation proved surprisingly resilient, with unsurprisingly negative implications for women's earnings.

As the authors acknowledge, these case studies may not be representative (they promise a future statistical analysis of changes in the entire range of occupations). Also needed is more exploration of the larger picture of earnings mobility. Trends in relative pay within occupations are at least as important as occupational segregation (a point Goldin emphasizes). The connections between explicit worker strategies and implicit cultural processes also deserve more consideration. Some of the case studies indicate that jobs came to be characterized as "feminine" after they lost their relative economic status.

Joan Acker's *Doing Comparable Worth* offers some important insights into the valuation of male and female occupations. The book begins with a clear explanation of the practice of assessing pay equity. Large organizations in both the private and the public sector have long relied on job evaluation studies that link pay scales to job characteristics and occupational titles. These studies traditionally ranked predominantly male and female occupations differently, often stipulating lower levels of pay for female occupations even where these had the same score for characteristics such as skill level or responsibility.

Such overt forms of bias are easy to remedy. More problematic are methods of assigning and valuing distinct job characteristics such as levels of skill, responsibility, and stress. These evaluations have a strong subjective component that can simply reproduce a cultural description of the requirements of predominantly female jobs. Similarly, they can reproduce class biases, such as overvaluation of formal educational credentials. Acker brings these technical issues to life by describing her



participation on a task force assigned to eliminate gender bias in Oregon public sector employment.

The implementation of a new job evaluation study, which involved cooperation with the state personnel department, a management consulting firm, and two major public employee unions, traversed a political and methodological minefield. In fact, the effort to develop a true comparable worth system was blown away, replaced by a compromise that simply raised the occupational classifications of the lowest paid (predominantly female) workers within the state system. As Acker points out, both management and unions wanted to use comparable worth to their own ends and were ultimately unable to agree on anything except a form of poverty relief.

Acker's vivid descriptions highlight the centrality of political power and the hierarchical values implicit in any job evaluation system. Unfortunately, the fascinating narrative of *realpolitik* buries some of the tough theoretical issues. What if her task force had won? What if feminists had successfully imposed their own values on state occupational pay scales? Would such a victory have reflected anything more than the participants' own political power? By the end of the book, Acker seems to have relinquished her confidence in comparable worth as anything but a strategy for revealing just how arbitrary wage scales are.

The wrangling and maneuvering she describes make market forces look almost attractive by comparison. But as all three books show, the force that market competition actually exerts is remarkably weak. Corporate bureaucracies, personnel departments, trade unions, and more informal forms of strategic collusion have provided men with institutional vehicles for defending their access to better paying jobs. Women need some vehicles of their own—affirmative action and comparable worth campaigns, as well as more feminist analyses of the workplace.

---

**Women and Industrialization: Gender at Work In Nineteenth-Century England.** By *Judy Lowm*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.

**A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences.** By *Alice Kessler-Harris*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990.

*Ava Baron* Rider College

THESE BOOKS CONTRIBUTE in diverse ways to current theoretical reassessments in women's history. By questioning the alleged gender neutrality of economic concepts and relations and showing how gender has been incorporated into

social practices and institutions, the authors provide new ways to make gender visible and shed additional light on the concept of separate spheres so central to feminist politics and research. They also support recent efforts to broaden traditional gender analysis by demonstrating that gender is a crucial concept for understanding the lives of men as well as women.

In *Women and Industrialization: Gender at Work in Nineteenth-Century England*, Judy Lown documents the ways mill work and family life were intertwined. She looks not only at women as workers but also at the employment patterns, family life, housing conditions, and community activities of both male and female workers and owners at the Courtauld silk mills in Halstead, Essex, England.

At its beginning early in the nineteenth century the Courtauld firm had adopted paternalistic management policies in order to reconcile its practice of hiring low-paid female workers with the ideology of female domesticity. The firm had recreated the traditional family in the mill so that women's employment supported, rather than undermined, patriarchal principles. The hierarchical job and wage structure in the mills enhanced men's positions at work and at home and reinforced women's overall subordination and dependency.

While Lown demonstrates the women workers' resistance to exploitation, she refuses to romanticize them. She presents a balanced picture of the subordination and the constraints women faced, on the one hand, and the pride women took in their work and the ways they circumvented and opposed employers' efforts to control them, on the other hand. The reality of mill women's lives stood in stark contrast to the era's exaggerated stereotypes of working women; the women mill workers were neither degenerate nor admirably independent. The independence women gained by working in the mill was tempered by their low status and pay. The ideology of women's domesticity was a double-edged sword: while it kept women in subordinate positions at work and in the family, it also created the foundation upon which women developed bonds and networks with one another even across class lines to renegotiate, reinterpret, and resist their oppression. Based on shared gender concerns, middle-class and working-class women worked together to reduce wife beating and to enable women to control their own property.

Lown's study confirms other recent research that has revised our picture of the nineteenth-century woman worker in Britain and the United States as young and single. Women workers did not constitute a transient labor pool in Halstead. They often continued to work after marriage; many worked in the mill for between ten and thirty years.

Lown's work furthers our understanding of the evolution of the family wage ideal. Women's employment did not always contradict masculine respectability. But in Halstead in the 1890s men's anxieties about losing

power and status were exacerbated by increased job competition from women workers as agricultural and household production declined, by new cultural definitions of female respectability, and by the influence of male trade unionism from northern England. Men who were part of the labor aristocracy in Halstead began to demand a family wage and expected their wives to stay at home after marriage. A similar change took place in the middle-class family: women lost their important place in the activities of the Courtauld firm as the business prospered.

Lown charts a complex process of continually shifting alliances across class and gender. She sees areas of tensions and conflict as well as of accommodation between the interests of men and those of capitalists. Contrary to traditional conceptions of capitalist patriarchy, capitalists are not gender-neutral and male workers are not free of class interests. By the end of the century, male workers and mill owners had divergent interests in supporting women's subordination. Manufacturers who continued to rely on women's labor vehemently opposed protective labor legislation for women; male workers, who now saw women workers as a threat to their status and respectability, supported such laws. Lown explains that the protective legislation controversy was essentially a debate among different groups of men over "who should control women and what form this control should take" (214).

Alice Kessler-Harris's *A Woman's Wage* is theoretically ambitious and broad in scope. To an even greater extent than in her previous work she illuminates current issues concerning gender equality at the workplace by drawing on the past.

Kessler-Harris describes these as "provocative" rather than definitive essays. They challenge us to examine the hidden assumptions in our standard analytic tools and how these have prevented us from seeing how gender has operated in the market. They demonstrate some of the ways feminist scholarship may unwittingly serve to support policies that perpetuate gender inequality.

The book is framed around the major wage strategies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the family wage, living wage, minimum wage, equal pay, and comparable worth. She imaginatively uses popular debates about the wage to reveal the role played by cultural ideas of fairness and justice in setting wages, ideas that were based on assumptions about the appropriate roles of men and women at home and at work. Working-class efforts to achieve a family wage were a struggle to gain higher income and to create a patriarchal social order in which men worked in the labor force and women depended on them. A family wage represented an aspiration for a man, but a woman's wage denoted social failure for a woman. A woman's wage, about half that of a man's, was designed to enable a woman to supplement the wages of others, not to support herself independently.

The notion of a living wage took the gendered expectations embedded in a family wage further, increasingly marginalizing women. It simply defined out of existence the possibility for women to earn the same as men. Implicit in the notion of a living wage was the belief that the working girl should receive sufficient remuneration to protect her morality but not to allow for "too comfortable" a life-style that would encourage independence and discourage marriage. Women's wage rates, far more than men's, were openly based on custom and justified in terms of men's and women's differential requirements and the needs of the family rather than on the basis of productivity. The discourse on the living wage suggested that a woman could achieve independence and self-fulfillment as a wage earner, but only at the cost of family well-being.

The debate over minimum wage legislation during the first decades of the twentieth century centered around the concept of a living wage and the gendered assumptions it embodied. To the casual observer the Supreme Court's 1923 decision in *Adkins v. Children's Hospital* invalidating a minimum wage law for women and minors appears as an anomaly, for it directly contradicted the fifteen-year-old precedent established in *Muller v. Oregon*, which maintained that women's (but not men's) working conditions and hours could be subject to government regulation. But Kessler-Harris shows that the *Adkins* decision was a logical result of the ways definitions of womanhood were incorporated into the meaning of the wage.

In her chapter "Providers," Kessler-Harris probes the gender ideology of the 1930s to highlight the limitations of the concept of separate spheres. Her analysis builds on recent challenges to this concept that have focused on its dichotomous character and its tendency to overemphasize gender bonding while deemphasizing differences among women.

She reproaches feminist scholars (including herself) for reifying the categories of separate spheres and imposing them on the past. The notion of separate spheres has served both to explain and to justify women's inequality in the labor market. Arguing against the tide of much recent work in women's history that has emphasized women's distinct values, culture, and organizing styles, Kessler-Harris claims that the differences between men and women are not always sharply defined. And she points to the political dangers for women of relying on dichotomous gender categories: even when feminist scholars define women's differences from men positively, an emphasis on sexual difference can perpetuate women's inequality by reinforcing definitions of a woman's "proper place."

Kessler-Harris questions whether gender was the primary lens, or even a lens, through which women workers have always understood their experience. An individual may be motivated by a number of different factors.

She therefore cautions historians not to assume gender's significance for the people they study. She rightfully emphasizes the need to historically ground gender analysis; gendered expectations vary and change.

While her research provides some important correctives to our understanding of gender, it also raises some troubling questions for those interested in gender analysis. Can we develop a theory that simultaneously conceives gender as a central category of historical analysis and also as one factor among many which may or may not have significance at any given historical period? How can we create a gendered analysis of practices and institutions while recognizing that individuals may not conceive their own identities or realities in gendered terms? Where does the deconstruction of existing approaches that emphasize mutually exclusive gender categories lead us? Are we creating a new theory of gender or simply displacing a dichotomy with a linear continuum?

In "The Double Meaning of Equal Pay," Kessler-Harris explores the struggle to achieve "equal pay for equal work." The key to understanding how the principle (not the reality) of equal pay came to be established as acceptable social policy lies in the ambiguity of the term, which allowed for multiple interpretations: for advocates of women's rights equal pay challenged prevailing notions of wage discrimination; for the male labor movement it was a strategy to fend off employers' efforts to displace men with women paid at a lower rate; for defenders of the traditional family it was a means to discourage employers from hiring women and disrupting home life.

In her concluding and most insightful chapter Kessler-Harris demonstrates the significance of history for social policy in a discussion of comparable worth. Debates about pay equity, like those concerning protective labor laws, pregnancy disability, and affirmative action, have all rested on arguments about whether women should be treated the same or differently from men. Policymakers, judges, lawyers, and feminists on both sides of the controversy typically have drawn on gender stereotypes and selective visions of the history of women in the labor force. "Without a history," Kessler-Harris argues, "public policy follows the paths of social myth" (128). Understanding current debates about comparable worth necessitates replacing abstract conceptions of women's roles and "woman's culture" with definitions of gender difference that are historically specific. For Kessler-Harris the lesson of the *EEOC v. Sears, Roebuck & Co.* sex discrimination case—in which the research of women's historians was used to support the contention that Sears' highly sex-segregated labor force simply reflected "natural" sex differences rather than discriminatory hiring practices—is clear: historians of women cannot write without attention to the present potential uses of their work. As historians of women our work has just begun.

**Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1838.** By *Barbara Bush*.  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

**House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in  
Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro.** By *Sandra Lauderdale Graham*. New  
York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

**Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean.** By  
*Marietta Morrissey*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989.

*Brenda Gayle Plummer* University of Wisconsin—  
Madison

**H**ISTORIES OF LATIN AMERICA and the Caribbean have made landmark contributions to our understanding of the modern world. Only recently, however, have scholars come to appreciate the significance of gender in reconstructing the economic foundations of society in the Americas. *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, *House and Street*, and *Slave Women in the New World* demonstrate the massive historical presence of women in American working classes, most especially women of color, who toiled not only as household servants but also as field laborers. Taken in its totality, this female proletariat served as the yardstick against which all other groups were measured. Their social and civil status defined even the spatial dimensions of social reality in mansions as well as on rural plantations.

Barbara Bush and Marietta Morrissey both examine the slavery of women in the Caribbean. Morrissey's work focuses on the French, British, Spanish, and Dutch colonies. Bush's work focuses substantially on the British West Indies but also generously samples the slavery systems of other empires and refers to African societies for comparison. Both engage the principal historiographic issues and major theoretical debates surrounding Caribbean slavery, but Morrissey does this in greater detail and with greater complexity. Bush, who is writing for the general reader, succeeds admirably in making her analysis accessible to the nonspecialist.

These histories of female slavery share a preoccupation with several themes, among them the relationship between gender and social stratification in slavery and the development of plantation systems; the effect of slave-holding ideology; slave demography, especially the widely debated questions about the causes of low fertility and high mortality rates among Caribbean slaves; the relationship between household economy and plan-

tation agriculture; resistance; and the impact of bondage on Caribbean family structure. Both authors contend that many current disputes in slavery studies can be resolved by examining the link between gender and plantation production.

Marxist, neoclassical, world-systems, and dependency theorists disagree about the fundamental nature of New World slavery, including the reasons for its eventual demise. The disagreement turns on the nature of capitalism itself—on the extent to which slavery has historically been driven by labor or market relations. Scholars debate whether plantation slavery is an independent mode of production or an integral part of mercantile capitalism. Morrissey posits a synthesis of these views that is grounded in the articulation of household production with capitalist relations. In her view, a sharper picture of gender during slavery emerges from investigating the tension between the slaves' desire for self-sufficiency and colonial economic interests—between the provision ground and the cane field, the higglers' marketplace and the global economy—and the degree to which family structure and male dominance conditioned those conflicts.

The decline of the household economy and subsequent use of women in field work that accompanied the intensification of plantation exploitation universally lowered women's status. Morrissey and Bush agree that, in spite of the higher valuation of male workers, it was the employment of women as unskilled laborers that carried slavery through to the end of the era. For Morrissey, involuntary servitude collapsed not because of inefficiency but because it simply could not meet the demand that it reproduce the labor force biologically and socially while simultaneously increasing productivity. No allowance was made for gender in doing the heavy work on the estates, and this fact, coupled with planter disinterest in encouraging childbirth, made it difficult to replenish the labor force and ultimately, to maintain the slavery system.

The structural aspects of plantation society and economy lend themselves readily to empirical study. Yet students of oppressed groups must address the underlying consciousness in their discussions of agency and tease out subtler evidence to uphold their version of the public/private dichotomy. It is at this point that considerations of culture become important. Neither of these labor histories fully satisfies in that regard. Of the two, Bush is the more thorough and nuanced in her presentation of cultural dynamics. Yet even she is not altogether successful; in her argument that witchcraft was a particularly female form of resistance, for example, she does not sufficiently demonstrate that mastery of it was gender-specific. Morrissey, who finds class analysis no basis for understanding the ideological atmosphere imbibed by slaves, draws on the old argument that while capitalism promoted such "male" values as individ-

ualism and competition, women's household activity somehow retained antithetically a collectivist, and even countercapitalist, ethos. She presents no evidence to support this claim, which is made dubious by easily available observations to the contrary.

These criticisms are not intended to underestimate the difficulties confronting those who study the private dimension of oppressed peoples' experience. Sandra Lauderdale Graham's effort to grapple with public/private antinomies in servants' lives in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro illustrates another aspect of the problem. Graham describes a Rio where in 1870 the majority of women were domestics. The 1860–1910 period she examines represents a traditional era marked by emancipation and by the preservation of the customary patriarchal forms that had characterized slave-holding society. Female slaves and servants traded autonomy and security through officially encouraged dependence. Aside from pay, they expected to receive living accommodations, food and clothing, and paternalistic benevolence from their employers. In exchange, bosses earned the loyalty and obedience of their maidservants, over whom they acquired legal power. The resulting dependency blurred the distinction between voluntary and involuntary servitude and eased the transition to full wage labor. The extent to which these domestics simply accepted the world as defined for them by their masters or were able to articulate a reality partially insulated from ubiquitous exploitation is the crux of the matter.

The title *House and Street* serves as the vital metaphor for the divergent worlds of servants and masters. House and street form critical definitions of space, role, and class. Respectable, that is, bourgeois, women remained practically secluded. If unescorted, they avoided the streets, which marked the public sphere. In the houses' private sphere, employers extended the family identity to female servants and guarded the good reputations of their houses by pressuring domestics to conform to the ideal of seclusion. Bourgeois and servile women understood seclusion and class differently, however: the house was not always a bastion of security for working-class women, and the street might provide freedom for them rather than danger.

Servitude in the city raises questions of political authority that do not emerge in the plantation milieu. United States urban slavery, for example, brought state power increasingly to bear on master-slave relations. In Brazil, by contrast, the master class opposed such intervention. Conflict arose between the bourgeoisie and the state over monitoring of servants as employers resisted public health proposals to license wet nurses and demolish the slums from whence servants came. Even epidemics, interpreted by the state as requiring greater control of the poor, proved insufficient to obtain employers' approval of regulation and formal work



contracts. Only the inexorable pressures of modernization led to gradual change.

While Graham admirably limns the conflicts between the respective domains of house and street, some questions about servants' perceptions and experiences remain unaddressed. The master class forced domestics to appreciate the house and street distinction, but did servants, like Caribbean slaves, define reputation and respectability in their own terms? How, for example, did they socially construct the personal experience of slavery? How important was it for blacks and mulattoes to be born "of a free womb"? Were immigrant European maids more upwardly mobile than the rest? How successfully did women parlay petty trading, which complemented domestic work, into tangible gains for themselves?

The answers to these questions depend on an inside view. In general, Graham says little about how female servants interacted with male servants as a group and with each other. Were these servants, like female Caribbean slaves, subordinated to all men? If so, there is even less reason to place the master at the center of the servants' world. Something may be lost, moreover, by conflating servants and slaves before 1889. Is it valid to imply that because they were treated alike they saw their situations as identical? And indeed, were they? More attention to race, color, ethnicity, and civil status is needed here.

As with the slavery studies, this text does not completely address cultural issues. Is it sufficient to interpret *candomblé* and other Afro-Brazilian cults as the emotional refuge of the oppressed, or did they exert more powerful influences across the spectrum of Brazilian society? Did a set of shared values neutralize tensions between masters and servants, or did all resistance counterpose a cultural as well as a psychological dynamic?

Gendered studies of servitude have needed more subtle, complex analyses, a requirement that these labor histories go a long distance toward meeting. Despite their shortcomings, they have ably managed the difficult task of weaving together the intricate web of class, race, ethnicity, and culture, and constitute a solid base for subsequent exploration.

**Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction.** Edited and with an introduction by *Ellen G. Friedman* and *Miriam Fuchs*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.

**Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern.** By *Patricia Waugh*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989.

**Herself Beheld: The Literature of the Looking Glass.** By *Jenijoy La Belle*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988.

*Carolyn Allen* University of Washington

INTERSECTIONS OF FEMINISM, postmodernism, and poststructural theory have become increasingly common in literary study. Reading these three books made me realize how familiar such arguments have become and how engaging I find them; I missed them when they were absent. Unfortunately, however, these discussions have so far largely excluded attention to crucial feminist thinking on racial, ethnic, class, and sexual diversity. I appreciated the poststructuralist perspectives these books sometimes presented but wondered whether a wider selection of texts might not have provided less restricted theoretical and critical insights.

*Breaking the Sequence* is a collection of essays on twentieth-century women's experimental writing; the critical methodologies of its contributors range from formalist close reading to feminist poststructuralism. After the editors' introduction, which traces a tradition of "feminine discourse" among women experimentalists, and two broader essays on women and experimentation, the volume is divided chronologically into essays on women writers before 1930, from 1930 to 1960, and after 1960. (The postsixties section contains almost half the essays.) The book concludes with two essays on women writers in translation. The strength of such an organization lies in its attention to lesser-known writers such as Ann Quin, Barbara Guest, Lydia Davis, and Maxine Chernoff. But the chronological approach—as well as the editors' introduction—suggests a linear historical development of a single "tradition" among very disparate writers from various critical points of view. At the same time, diversity in this book does not extend widely to writers from traditions other than white British, North American, and French; some Jewish women appear, but no writers of color, omissions that considerably weaken an otherwise admirable and important project.

For the most part, the essays concentrate on formal, or aesthetic, characteristics of "experimenters"; this emphasis highlights the range of styles but keeps the volume from contributing directly to discussions of feminist critical theory. Many of the essayists present the formal innovations of twentieth-century women writers without arguing about how their literary experiments might have been informed by gender, race, ethnicity, and other issues of power. The strongest essays in the volume successfully extend their discussions into broader theoretical contexts; these include Rachel DuPlessis on the intertextual connections between Woolf and Stein; Donna Gerstenberger on the critical reception of Barnes's *Nightwood*; Larry McCaffery on punk style in Kathy Acker; Germaine Bree on the particularities of experiment in Sarraute and Wittig; and Maria DiBattista on the "clandestine" in Duras.

Similarly, the three opening essays take on larger issues. The editors' "Contexts and Continuities: An Introduction to Women's Experimental Fiction in English" attempts to define an encompassing literary tradition for women experimental writers, separate from the male avant-garde, as a strategy for recovery and recognition of the women's works. While the goal is surely admirable, the argument for the existence of a "feminine writing" collapses too many crucial differences among male and female experimenters and among the various women writers under discussion. A subsequent essay by Christine Brooke-Rose—whose literary work is discussed in the volume—makes a lively case against "woman writer" as a critical category and unsettles the lines of the linear tradition drawn in the introductory essay.

The third broad perspective offered in the book, Marianne DeKoven's essay on the gender politics of experimental writing, usefully argues for the recognition of the antipatriarchal potential of some male experimentalists; she also calls for increased critical attention to how experimental women writers, in a kind of "two-way traffic,"<sup>1</sup> are both related to and subversive of the male avant-garde. Although the broader focus of the three opening essays is not maintained throughout, the collection remains timely and useful as one of the few attempts to call attention to experimental modes of writing by women (some of them little known) and to establish an intersection between these modes and feminist narrative theory.

The relation between male postmodernism and women writers that DeKoven considers so carefully is also the beginning point of Patricia Waugh's *Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern*. Focusing in her first two chapters on theories of the subject, Waugh argues that

<sup>1</sup> DeKoven (75), quoting Laura Mulvey from her essay "Feminism, Film, and the Avant-garde," in *Women, Writing and Writing about Women*, ed. Mary Jacobus (London: Croom, 1979), 188.

twentieth-century women writers have had a contradictory relation to the male-defined subjectivity of both liberal humanism and decentered postmodernism. Women writers have often "resisted or rejected" these constructions in favor of a relational subjectivity "where sameness and differences are . . . recognized as *equally* important aspects of an effective sense of self" (85). Waugh's first chapter, especially the section on "Subjectivity, Femininity, and the Postmodern Person," is a summary of the interplay of feminism and postmodernism that will be particularly useful to feminist readers who seek basic grounding in the terms of this debate. The heart of Waugh's own contribution to the discussion comes in chapter 2, where she briefly reviews classic psychoanalytic theories of the subject (Freud, Lacan, Klein) in order to problematize women writers' connection to traditionally defined modernism and postmodernism. She argues for an extension of Chodorow's work on object relations as a model for subjectivity in keeping with a "both/and" theory of the subject. Throughout her discussion, Waugh tends to conflate "feminist" and "woman" as descriptors for "writer," which considerably weakens her theorizing. And, as a consequence of her psychoanalytic model, Waugh suppresses all differences among women writers in order to place sexual difference in the foreground and to lay out the women's contradictory historical relation to masculinist literary theory. Still, her opening discussions present a succinct overview of the issues involved and advance one way to understand the problematic connection of (white, middle-class, primarily heterosexual) women to postmodernism.

Waugh's remaining three chapters discuss particular women writers. Like Friedman and Fuchs, Waugh organizes her material chronologically; she devotes one chapter to Woolf, then divides postwar writers from contemporary ones. (Her middle group includes Drabble, Brookner, Plath, Tyler, and Paley, while Friedman and Fuchs address Rhys, Barnes, Bowles, H. D., and Nin from the same period.) But throughout, Waugh continues her thematic discussion of subjectivity, separating the liberal humanist tradition from the postmodernist one and arguing the ways in which her subjects challenge both traditions. Her book has the theoretical continuity that an anthology almost invariably lacks. Her discussion of Atwood in the context of theories of the body and of masquerade offers striking—albeit brief—readings of *The Edible Woman* and *Lady Oracle* precisely because she keeps her overarching theoretical points clearly in view. Other discussions, especially toward the book's end, seem rushed in their brevity. But on the whole, *Feminine Fictions*, like *Breaking the Sequence*, makes significant contributions to white gynocentric criticism in its argument for a revised definition of postmodernism in light of recent women's writing.

Jenijoy La Belle's *Herself Beheld: The Literature of the Looking Glass* does not set out primarily to add to either feminist or postmodernist theorizing. It nevertheless contributes on its own terms to feminist literary criticism by classifying and discussing scenes in which a woman looks at her own reflection in a mirror; it is a (literal) example of "images of women" criticism. Organized roughly by the extent to which a woman (again, almost always white, heterosexual, and middle or upper class, as the author notes) identifies with her image in the mirror, the book mentions an impressively large number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century poems, stories, and novels by both women and men. But read in the context of *Breaking the Sequence* and *Feminine Fictions*, *Herself Beheld* lacks theoretical discussion that would have enriched its arguments. It is not that all critical books about literature have to have theoretical grounding to be interesting but that the subject of this particular book, the mirror—or even the woman in the mirror—has had so much attention in recent theory. La Belle says that "the psychology of mirroring . . . is at the heart of this book" (153), yet there are no extended feminist or nonfeminist theoretical discussions of psychoanalysis, the subject/self, identity construction, or literary representation. Without them, the individual literary discussions seem truncated. For readers wishing to follow an important trope across a range of literature, however, *Herself Beheld* is well organized and thorough. Together with the other books reviewed here, it indicates the variety of methods used by feminist critics, although not the diversity of women's experience open to feminist critical thinking.

---

**Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture.** By Joanna Hubbs. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

**Goddess Embroideries of Eastern Europe.** By Mary B. Kelly. Winona, Minn.: Northland Press of Winona, 1989.

Dianne E. Farrell Moorhead State University

**B**OTH THESE BOOKS examine the Great Goddess or Mother Goddess theme in Russian and neighboring cultures but differ in scope and approach. In *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture*, Joanna Hubbs traces the theme as a historian of culture; in *Goddess Embroideries of Eastern Europe*, Mary Kelly traces it as an artist-ethnographer. Both books are informed by a feminist consciousness.

"Mattyoshka," as every traveler to Russia learns, is a set of nesting wooden dolls, the one souvenir you are sure to acquire. In *Mother Russia*, Hubbs makes this little figure speak as the embodiment of her central theme, Mother Russia, projecting Russia's vision of herself as a nation. The centrality of the feminine in Russian culture has been noticed casually for a long time, but so single-mindedly does history focus on the male that it is the "superfluous man" who has received the attention in Russian literary history, not the strong woman.

In political life, the establishment of tsarist autocracy (the rule of the "Little Father" tsar) has captured historians' attention. In *Tsar and People*, Michael Cherniavsky treated the male side of the myth, but until now no one has tried to write a history of the "Mother Russia" myth. The feminine has received mention, but only in passing. For example, Cherniavsky remarked that in the nineteenth century "among the masses, [Holy Russia, Mother Russia] retained its anti-state flavor and continued to exist as a rather vague image of self-identity and of promise for the future."<sup>1</sup> George Fedotov, the great scholar of the Russian religious mind, pointed to the essential femininity of the national mythos: "At every step in studying Russian popular religion one meets the longing for a great divine female power."<sup>2</sup> Fedotov declared his certainty that Greek Orthodox Christianity alone was not sufficient to account for "the deep and rich forms of the Divine Womanhood cults . . . on Russian soil."<sup>3</sup> In *Mother Russia*, Hubbs has at long last lifted from the shadows these feminine forms and done so with such clarity, with such brilliant and imaginative linkages, that this submerged truth becomes, like Matryoshka, a revelation.

In part 1 of her book, Hubbs seeks the wellsprings of divinized Mother Russia deep in pagan antiquity, threading her way among prehistoric artifacts and archaic myths. Guided by Marja Gimbutas, she sees there a clash between feminine and masculine mythologies with their respective origins in agrarian and warrior-herdsman conceptions of nature. Her explanation of how the "law of the fathers" was imposed upon the "land of the mothers" is more sophisticated than, and as well founded in archaeological and ethnographic evidence as, any such discussions by non-specialists. That is, there is no talk here of matriarchy, but of matriclan and matrifocal cultures in conflict with warrior elites that protected and lorded over them. From the evidence of folklore, folk imagery, and popular rites, Hubbs reconstructs both the destructive side of the Russian

<sup>1</sup> Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961), 229.

<sup>2</sup> George Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (1946; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 1:362.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Great Goddess (Baba Yaga, *rusalki*, and other generally harmful spirits) and the constructive side (Mother Earth, Rozhanitsa, Mokosh). Under Christianity, the goddess takes on Christian identities: Mary in her various aspects and Paraskeva Piatnitsa ("Friday"), for whose sake women had to abstain from spinning and weaving on Friday.

Part 2 of Hubbs's book explores the masculine response to the myth of divine maternity. The progression is from feminine-empowered warrior sons, charged with the protection of the maternal clans, to princes saintly in themselves—self-sacrificial protectors of Rus'—to tsar-fathers who, as holy bridegrooms of Mother Russia, wielded autocratic authority over her and controlled her with increasing severity.

A new set of "sons," the gentry-intelligentsia, appeared in the nineteenth century, and their demand for an identity as an educated class led them to champion and serve the "mother" (expressed in the suffering peasantry) against the power of the "father" (the state). The intelligentsia's longing for self-government and self-expression was justified in terms of the myth. Serving the people—serving Mother Russia—was a religio-psychological imperative, not just politics. Religious and psychological yearnings stood in for the missing political life. Men displaced their idealized longings upon the "missing half," the long-suppressed feminine side of the personality and culture. Of course, the myth of the strong and self-sacrificing female was a burden upon real women.

In general, the historically more recent parts of the book are impressionistic rather than detailed. Hubbs is quite aware of how the myth was used and betrayed by the Soviet "sons" for their own purposes but unfortunately devotes only a few pages to it. I say unfortunately because, while the main purpose of her book is to illuminate the origin and development of the myth, specialist and nonspecialist alike are bound to be interested in its impact upon the twentieth century. And it is precisely in interpreting the Stalin era that the myth finds its most impressive application. Stalin exploited the Mother Russia myth in the collectivization drive; he designated the Party as "mother," then decimated it. As Kateřina Clark has shown in her essay "Utopian Anthropology as a Context for Stalinist Literature," a family paradigm was systematically projected upon Soviet culture through the literature-propaganda of the 1930s—a family in which there was one Great Father, Stalin.<sup>4</sup> Mothers were conspicuously absent, and "sons" remained childlike. Surely that era was—like the Hitler era in Germany—the height of the rejection of the feminine and the *Götterdämmerung* of patriarchy. Both Mother Russia and the people were

<sup>4</sup> Kateřina Clark, "Utopian Anthropology as a Context for Stalinist Literature," in *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1977).

reduced to a mute hypothetical source of legitimacy, while the official cult of the fathers reached its extremity.

Any book about "the feminine myth" is sure to be examined by feminist critics for its implications, both theoretical and practical. While this book is not shaped by a social agenda, it would be mistaken to conclude that the author is promoting the idea of divine motherhood. Hubbs devotes her efforts to the reconstruction of the myth, not its critique; for this she is sure to be criticized.

While Hubbs has not elaborated upon the political and social implications of the myth, she makes one implication clear: Russia possesses not only an autocratic tradition but also a deep and strong anti-authoritarian tradition. The feminine side of the culture, long suppressed but still powerfully operative, sees the brother- and sisterhood of all Mother Russia's children as the basis for social community. This democratic communitarian impulse may come into play as present circumstances permit freer expression. Hubbs wisely makes no specific predictions about the policies or institutions in which this impulse might find expression.

Mary Kelly's great contribution is to have brought the artist's skills of visual perception to bear upon a mass of materials and, with the aid of considerable ethnographic knowledge, to have made us all "see" the goddess. Many a historian has examined similar archaeological or ethnographic material and said, "Yes, but it might very well mean something else." Only when you see many variations on one clear theme—see realistic representations next to a series of increasingly abstracted ones—only then do you "see," and become convinced, that you have before your eyes the goddess and not dancing dolls or "Anywoman." Kelly points out that this constitutes a canon of goddess imagery. The iconographic prototype is replicated precisely, with only minor variations, over hundreds of years, because magical efficacy demands fidelity to the canon. Only in the nineteenth century, when the significance was lost, did the canon become muddled.

Kelly is also skillful and sensitive in reading the visual message in the context of women's lives and the life of the agricultural village. She explores use, preservation, and transmission. She has used the expertise of a multitude of informants—primarily the museum curators, who know these materials best. She has found that goddess imagery is common in papercutting and Easter eggs, which were women's arts, but that it is fairly common also in the carvings of lintels, where the Goddess protects the openings of the house as she does the openings of clothing.

To be sure, the book has flaws. In not knowing Slavic languages, Kelly has made innumerable errors in transliteration and citation. Some names and terminology from different Slavic languages are arbitrarily mixed.



The literature on ancient Slavic deities is complex, and Kelly has not entirely mastered it. ("Pirom," e.g., is presumably Perun, chief god of the ancient Rus' pantheon, a thunder god comparable to Thor.) Her account of the ancient goddesses is generally acceptable, but one would feel more confident about her knowledge of the Scythians if she did not alternately refer to them as "Skiefs," apparently a transliteration of the Russian term for Scythians. I am also uncomfortable with her blithe assumption that ancient matriarchal societies, including the Amazon kingdom, existed on the Black Sea littoral. Soviet researchers also presume the reality of matriarchal societies, but they have been bound by Engels. Neither Engels nor his sources, Bachofen and Morgan, differentiated between matriarchal and matrilineal. Unless one could show that women, not men, were the ones consistently buried with the full regalia of power, how could one know what the balance of power between the sexes was?

Kelly's real achievement is in reading visual symbols. This kind of analysis is underrated in our learned culture, even though reading the pictographic language of women and other groups deprived of a public voice is extremely important.

The book raises some tantalizing associations and questions. First, Kelly puzzles about the goddess in the double-headed boat, which displays either deer or horse heads: Is there a link, in the idea of soul-transport, among boat, horse, and deer—alternate modes of soul-travel for shamans? Second, if horns symbolize female power, as Kelly maintains, did the cuckold's horns, as a sign of male shame, have their origins there? (One recalls the great pair of ritual horns at Knossos, where goddess power is so much in evidence.) And finally, was goddess magic and ritual really a sign of female power, as Kelly consistently maintains, or did it represent the resort of the weak—a mode of power for those who have no power? Or did goddess power become this latterly, having been dethroned, then finally marginalized in the folkloric Baba Yaga? It is in part such questions that make this book so provocative.

---

## UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Toril Moi and Leslie King-Hammond are among the speakers invited to a second biennial conference titled "Gender and Academe: Who Cares?" October 31–November 2, 1991. The conference will feature scholarly research on the historical, contemporary, or future significance of gender in higher education. For further information, contact Lagretta T. Lenker, University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, LLL 012, Tampa, Florida 33620.

"Learning Together/Working Together: A South-North Dialogue" is the topic of the Fifth International Forum of the Association for Women in Development, to take place November 21–24, 1991, in Washington, D.C. The conference intends to bring together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers from both the southern and northern hemispheres and to examine women's political, economic, educational, and cultural empowerment and promote international organizing around common agendas. For more information, contact Conference Office, Division of Continuing Education, College Court Building, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506-6006 (913-532-5575).

A data base of Third World women's literary works is being compiled at Gustavus Adolphus College. The data base lists over six hundred novels, collections of short stories, plays, poetry collections, and personal narratives, and many entries are annotated. The data base can be searched by author, title, region, country, and to some extent by genre and key words. Information about new publications is welcome. For search information, contact Barbara Fister, Folke Bernadotte Memorial Library, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota 56082 (telephone 507-933-7553; internet address fister @ gacvx.1.gac.edu).

### Calls for papers

*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* seeks submission for a special issue, "Feminism and the Law," slated for publication in 1993. Feminist jurisprudence is challenging traditional legal analysis as little

Materials for United States and International Notes should be sent six months prior to the month of publication to Managing Editor, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 495 Ford Hall, 224 Church Street, S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455 (telephone 612-626-1695; FAX 612-626-1697). Material is published at the discretion of the editors.

## U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL NOTES

more than a celebration of rules that disrespect differences and privilege a particular class. The editorial board believes it is important to provide a forum for further exploration of this development in legal scholarship and to encourage transformative approaches to legal issues. The special issue editors, who include Mary Louise Fellows and Patricia Williams, welcome theoretical, historical, and empirical approaches and are particularly interested in inter- or multidisciplinary research that considers gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation as central to an analysis of jurisprudential questions. Please submit articles no later than September 1, 1992, to *Signs*, 495 Ford Hall, University of Minnesota, 224 Church Street S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455. Please observe guidelines in "Notice to Contributors" in this issue. For further information about this special issue, contact Mary Louise Fellows, 338 Law School, University of Minnesota, 229 19th Avenue, S., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455 (612-626-0264).

The ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, "Transformations: Women, Gender, Power," will take place June 11–13, 1993, at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The program committee welcomes proposals for complete panels, roundtables, or individual papers addressing the relations between feminist history and social and political practice and/or taking an interdisciplinary or comparative approach crossing national, cultural, racial, or ethnic lines. Please submit proposals in triplicate by February 1, 1992, and include panel title; title and one-page abstract for each paper; and one-page vita for each participant with address and telephone number. Enclose self-addressed, stamped postcard. Send proposals on U.S. topics to Elaine Abelson, New School for Social Research, Eugene Lang College, 65 West 11th Street, New York, New York 10011; on other than U.S. topics to Margaret Hunt, Amherst College 2254, P.O. Box 5000, Amherst, Massachusetts 01002; comparative U.S.–non-U.S. topics to either address. Mark correspondence "ATTN: Berkshire Conference."

The first International Conference on Women in Africa and African Diaspora: Bridges across Activism and the Academy, will be held in Nigeria, West Africa, in June 1992. Papers and activities will reflect every discipline in the academy as well as the contributions of practitioners and activists outside the academy. This will be an opportunity for researchers and activists inside and outside Africa to discuss mutual collective interests and plan collaborative work. The deadline for submission of proposals and abstracts is December 31, 1991; send to Organizing Committee, Women in Africa and African Diaspora, 1992, c/o Professor Obioma Nnaemeka, Department of French, The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio 44691 (216-263-24-3).

Articles are invited for a proposed anthology of theoretical explorations in the area of feminism and animal rights. History (such as the role of women in the antivivisection movement), critiques of science and medicine, anthropology, literary criticism, aesthetics, religion, ethical theory, "rights theory," and the interconnections among the social constructions of race, gender, class, and species are possible issues of interest, along with issues related to ecofeminism, popular culture, the Third World, persons of color, lesbians, and the differently abled. Please send two copies of articles, by June 30, 1992, to Carol Adams, 814 Grinnell Drive, Richardson, Texas 75081; Josephine Donovan, English Department, 304 Neville Hall, University of Maine, Orono, Maine 04469; or Susanne Kappeler, Flat 13, 92/94 Upper St., Giles, Norwich NR2 1LT, England.

"Childless by Choice," a feminist anthology, locates women's decisions not to have children within the context of their struggle for reproductive freedom and the right to self-determination. The editors are interested in hearing from women who have decided not to have children and who see this as a positive life choice. The anthology will consider the pressures that women experience in choosing childlessness and how race/ethnicity, culture, or sexual orientation affect this choice. Women of all races, classes, ages, and occupations are encouraged to respond. Contributions can take any creative form, not to exceed twenty pages. Those whose work is accepted will receive two copies of the anthology and a 40 percent discount on additional copies. Send contributions with a self-addressed, stamped envelope by December 1, 1991 to Herbooks, P.O. Box 7467, Santa Cruz, California 95061.

Papers are invited for "Alice in Wonderland, First International Conference on Girls and Girlhood: Transitions and Dilemmas," to be held June 16-19, 1992, in Amsterdam. Papers should relate girlhood to one of the following: eros, sexuality, and the body; policy-making and the state; imagination and representation; education and upbringing; youth culture and life-world; employment and schooling; theory and epistemology. For further information, write to Alice in Wonderland, First International Conference on Girls and Girlhood, Conference Service Vrije Universiteit, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The editors of "Connections and Disconnections: Mothers, Daughters, and Death," a collection of essays, invite submissions for a multidisciplinary collection of feminist perspectives on adult daughters' experience with the death of their mothers. Writers of poetry and short fiction, as well as creative and scholarly prose in the areas of philosophy, religious studies,

## U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL NOTES

critical and literary theory, developmental and clinical psychology, and related fields, are invited to submit their work. Send submissions by June 30, 1992, to Editors, Disconnections, Philosophy Department, De Paul University, 802 W. Belden, Chicago, Illinois 60614. For further information, call Mary Larrabee at 312-362-8224.

### **Comment and reply policy**

The Editors of *Signs* invite scholars to comment on articles appearing in current issues. To give the author an opportunity to reply in the same issue in which the comment appears, we ask that interested contributors contact the author of the article directly. (See "About the Contributors" section at the end of each issue.) Publication of the comment is not necessarily contingent upon the author's agreement to collaborate, but we encourage an open dialogue between contributors. Our intention is to take advantage of the opportunity for lively debate between authors and their readers, to highlight reader interest in the scholarship, and to refine the contributions and approaches that appear in *Signs*.

---

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**CAROLYN ALLEN** is associate professor of English and adjunct associate professor of women's studies at the University of Washington. She has recent and forthcoming articles on gender and reader response, on feminism and postmodernism, and on Djuna Barnes. Her current project is a study of the lesbian erotic in modern fiction.

**AVA BARON** is professor of sociology at Rider College in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. She has written on gender and work in printing, sewing, and the legal profession, as well as on labor legislation and women's work. She is the editor of *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), and is completing a new book titled "Men's Work: Masculinity and the Woman Question in the Printing Industry, 1850-1920."

**MAGGIE BERG** is assistant professor of English at Queen's University, Ontario. She has published articles on pre-Raphaelitism and Victorian literature. Her current interest is French feminist theory. She is the author of *Jane Eyre: Portrait of a Life* (Boston: Hall, 1987) and is working on a study of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.

**DAPHNE DE MARNEFFE** is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, and a psychology intern at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco. She studies psychoanalytic history, theory, and practice; childhood trauma; and gender development. Her dissertation research examines how young children begin to make sense of gender difference. With Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer she is coauthor of "When Theory and Practice Diverge: Gender-related Referral Patterns to Psychoanalysts," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* (in press).

**JANE DESMOND** is an artist-in-residence in dance at Duke University, where she also teaches courses in cultural criticism and experimental video. She is completing her doctorate in American studies at Yale. She has worked as a performer and choreographer and is editing a book of post-structuralist dance criticism to be published by Duke University Press.

**LISA J. DISCH** is assistant professor of political science at the University of Minnesota. Her research interests include democratic political theory and feminist theory. She is completing a book on the intersection

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

of contemporary feminist political thought and the writings of Hannah Arendt.

**DIANNE E. FARRELL** is assistant professor of history at Moorhead State University in Moorhead, Minnesota. She teaches Russian history and European women's history. Her research in cultural history has approached popular and "forbidden" cultures through the study of visual imagery. Her publications include "The Origins of Russian Popular Prints and Their Social Milieu in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 17, no. 1 (Summer 1983):9-47; "Laughter Transformed: The Shift from Medieval to Enlightenment Humor in Russian Popular Prints," in *Russia and the World of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. R. P. Bartlett, A. G. Cross, and K. Rasmussen (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1988), 157-76; and "Medieval Popular Humor in Russian Eighteenth-Century *Lubki*," *Slavic Review* (in press).

**NANCY FOLBRE** is associate professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst. She is the author of several articles that explore the economics of the family, including "The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1991): 463-84. She is currently working on several projects, including a book titled "Self-Love, the Mainspring: Feminism and Political Economy," a reexamination of the history of economic thought in Great Britain and the United States.

**MAŁGORZATA FUSZARA** is associate professor in the sociology of custom and law department in the Institute of Applied Social Sciences at the University of Warsaw, Poland. She chairs the Sociology of Law Committee of the Polish Sociological Association and is the coauthor of a draft of the new Polish Law of Assemblies. Her first book, in Polish, examined judicial methods of interpersonal conflict resolution. She is in the process of completing a study of family courts in Poland and recently became involved in women's studies and in the politics of abortion in Poland.

**SHAN HOLT** recently earned a doctorate in American history at the University of Pennsylvania. Her dissertation addressed the family economy of African-American farmers in post-Civil War North Carolina.

**JOAN B. LANDES** is professor of politics and women's studies at Hampshire College. She has published numerous articles on feminism, political philosophy, critical theory, and European graphic arts. She is the

author of *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988).

**SHIRLEY MANGINI** is professor and chair of Spanish at California State University, Long Beach. She has written extensively on twentieth-century Spanish literature and politics. Her most recent books are *Rojos y rebeldes: La cultura de la disidencia durante el Franquismo* (Reds and rebels: The culture of dissidence during the Franco period) (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1987) and an edition of Rosa Chacel's *Estación: Ida y vuelta* (Station: Round-trip) (Madrid: Catedra, 1989). She is completing a manuscript (in English) on the memorialistic writing and oral testimonies of women from the Spanish Civil War.

**ERNESTINE L. McHUGH** is assistant research anthropologist at the University of California, San Diego, and a visiting lecturer at Pitzer College. Her research interests center on religion and on the experience of individuals in culture. Her published work addresses problems of gender, self, and person in the Nepal Himalayas. She is working on a book titled "Negotiating Culture: Meaning and Experience among the Gurungs of Nepal."

**BRENDA GAYLE PLUMMER** is associate professor of history at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. She is working on a historical examination of the black American foreign policy audience from 1937 to 1967. Her work, ranging from essays on Haiti to studies of African-Americans and foreign affairs, is unified by an ongoing interest in race and ethnicity as a factor in international relations. She is the author of *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902–1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), and she is completing a book on Haitian-American relations.

**DOROTHY J. ROSENBERG** is an associate at Five Colleges, Inc., a center supported by Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts, and she is currently teaching at Mount Holyoke and the University of Massachusetts—Amherst. Her research focuses on gender, culture, and social policy issues in modern Germany, and she has published a number of articles on women in the former German Democratic Republic. Her *Daughters of Eve: Contemporary Women Writers of the GDR* (written with Nancy Lukens) is forthcoming (University of Nebraska Press, 1992). She is completing a book titled "Sotto Voce: Women, Literature and Social Change in the GDR" and is working on a project investigating images of Jewish women in postwar Germany.



## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**SUSAN SPERLING** teaches anthropology at Chabot College, a large, urban, multiethnic college in Hayward, California. Her recent book, *Animal Liberators: Research and Morality* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), examines the cultural context of antivivisection and animal rights movements. Trained as a physical anthropologist, she counts among her interests evolutionary science and theories of gender, medical anthropology, and the role of anthropology in community-based education.

**JULIA SZALAI** is a sociologist and head of the department of social policy at the Institute of Sociology and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. She received her doctorate in 1986 and in her thesis examined problems in the Hungarian health care system. She recently coedited a book with Bob Deacon titled *Social Policy in the New Eastern Europe* (Brookfield, Vt.: Gower, 1990). Her current work deals with problems in the history and theory of social policy and with the new poverty issues in Hungary.

---

## NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

THE EDITORS invite submission of article-length manuscripts, information and material for "Revisions/Reports," and documents for "Archives" that might appropriately be published in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Authors should keep in mind the interdisciplinary nature of the journal and strive to make their articles accessible to scholars in various fields of study. Where appropriate, authors are encouraged to address diversity issues involving race, class, sexual preference, etc.

The editors particularly invite submission of manuscripts for a forthcoming special issue, "Feminism and the Law"; a call for papers may be found in this issue.

We very much regret that we cannot pay contributors. Each author will receive 10 copies of the issue or a year's subscription (or renewal).

### Editorial Procedures:

All papers deemed appropriate for *Signs* are sent out anonymously to readers, upon whose judgments the editors rely heavily.

### Preparation of Copy:

1. Type all copy—including footnotes—double-spaced on standard bond paper, allowing 2-inch margins at the top and bottom of the page and generous margins on the sides. Articles should not exceed 35 pages.

2. A separate title page should include the article title and the author's name and address. The first page of the manuscript should have the article title 2 inches from the top of the page. The text should start 2 inches below the title. In order to protect anonymity, the author's name *should not* appear on the manuscript, and all identifying references and footnotes should appear on a separate page.

3. A glossy print of each illustration should accompany the manuscript.

4. The original manuscript, 3 copies, and an abstract of no more than 150 words should be sent to the Editors, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, 495 Ford Hall, 224 Church Street, S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Manuscripts will be returned only when accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

5. Unnecessarily genderized language should be avoided, including gender-specific terms ("men," "man," "mankind") for groups of people

## NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

and the personification of such groups as male ("the scholar's view of his task . . .").

### Format of Footnotes:

All footnotes should be typed double-spaced on a separate page (or pages) following the last page of text. They should be numbered consecutively and should correspond with the numbers in the text. Footnote style in most cases follows the University of Chicago *Manual of Style*. Some examples.

1. S. Brown, "Sex Role of Women in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Timely Revolt*, ed. Jean Demar and J. E. Soll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 10–21, esp. 13.

2. Many Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, and Linda Williams, eds., *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1984).

3. S. P. Moore, "Historical Changes in the Social Structure, 1610–1690" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1971).

4. Janet Bard, *Women of the Reformation*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic, 1963).

5. A. E. Zion, *Gender*, Women's Series, no. 8 (New York: Praeger, 1975).

6. Nancy Folbre and Marjorie Abel, "Women's Work and Women's Households: Gender Bias in the U.S. Census," *Social Research* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1989):545–70.

Second and later references to a previously cited work should be referred to by the author's last name and (in the case of several previous citations to works by the same author) the title of the work. Do not use *op. cit.* For articles, cite inclusive page numbers, as well as the specific page from which a direct quotation has been taken (see example 1 above).

# Cambridge University Press

## Feminist Literary Studies

An Introduction

**K. K. Ruthven**

As a lively contribution written by a man to a highly controversial topic dominated by women, this book is original and even provocative, but above all serves as a valuably clear and sympathetic guide to the complexities of an important issue.

*A Canto Book*

39852-5 Paper \$7.95

## Virginia Woolf

The Major Novels

**John Batchelor**

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) is one of the most interesting writers of our century. In this introductory book, John Batchelor tells the story of her life and writing career, highlighting the important aspects of Woolf's temperament: her passion, her learning, her acute intelligence, her lesbianism, her self-absorption.

*Bruck and Irish Authors*

32273-1 Hardcover \$39.50

31135-7 Paper \$11.95

## Naked Authority

The Body in Western Painting

1830-1908

**Marcia Pointon**

"This challenging book discusses intersubjectivity between painter, subject and viewer over the issue of gender in Western painting..." —*Publishers Weekly*

*Cambridge New Art History and Criticism*

38528-8 Hardcover \$49.50

40999-3 Paper \$18.95

## Aztecs

An Interpretation

**Inga Clendinning**

"There is no other book quite like this one. It is probably the best presentation of the Aztec people, their culture, and their city from the point of view of the Aztecs themselves."

—*Michael D. Cos, Yale University*

40093-7 Hardcover \$29.95

Now in paperback...

## Women in the Earliest Churches

**Ben Witherington III**

"The most significant study to be written on the women question so far... No serious debate about the Biblical teaching on women can now take place without taking into account the range of material and conclusions in this book."

—*Christian Book News*

*Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 59*

40789-3 Paper \$15.95

## Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts

Representing the Chambri in a World System

**Deborah B. Gewertz and**

**Frederick K. Errington**

Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington have worked as anthropologists in Papua New Guinea for nearly two decades.

In this, their second joint study of the Chambri, they consider the way those in a small-scale society, peripheral to the major centers of influence, struggle to sustain some degree of autonomy.

40012-0 Hardcover \$44.50

39587-9 Paper \$14.95

## Penelope's Web

Gender, Modernity, H. D.'s Fiction

**Susan Stanford Friedman**

The first book to examine the full scope of H.D.'s prose writings, which anticipates post-modernism in its explorations of gender, genre, and modernity. It contributes importantly to the many histories and theories of modernism that are redrawing its boundaries to include the achievements of women writers.

*Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture*

25579-1 Hardcover \$39.50

Available in bookstores or write:

**CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS**

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211. Call toll-free 800-872-7423.

MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

# THE WORLD OF WOMEN...



## ODD GIRLS AND TWILIGHT LOVERS

A HISTORY OF LESBIAN LIFE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

Lillian Faderman

"Lucid, engaging...

fascinating...moving..."

*Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* is full of facts and wonderful details that readers may not have encountered, things that are a pleasure to learn and that seem valuable to know."

—Los Angeles Times Book Review

**\$29.95\***

## THE OTHER PERSPECTIVE IN GENDER AND CULTURE

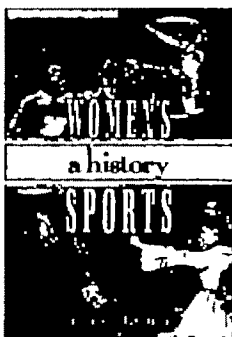
REWRITING WOMAN AND THE SYMBOLIC

Edited by

Juliet Flower MacConnell

*This collection of original essays by today's top feminist writers looks at literature, film, art, history, and pop culture, and the places where women make, have made, or are about to make a critical difference in the way the sexes are defined, valued and arranged*

**\$37.50**



## WOMEN'S SPORTS

A HISTORY

Allen Guttman

*In this pioneering work, Allen Guttman traces women's sports from antiquity to the present, from Queen Hatshepsut to Greta Waitz. Focusing on the cultural and social aspects, he examines the revolution in women's sports in the twentieth century and addresses the question of sexuality and athletics: have female athletes been exploited for their sexuality? Is a sexual response to sports appropriate?*

**\$29.95**

## GENDER IN CRISIS

WOMEN AND THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

Julie Peteet

*This intimate portrait of politically active Palestinian women during the era of the Palestinian resistance movement in Lebanon focuses on change in gender relations during intense and sustained crises. Peteet describes the types of organizations women have formed and their relationship with the larger nationalist movements.*

**\$37.50**



## SHIFTING SCENES

INTERVIEWS ON WOMEN, WRITING, AND POLITICS IN POST-48 FRANCE

Edited by

Alice A. Jardine and Anne M. Mackin

*"Two American feminists asked several French women intellectuals [Charvat, Cixous, Clément, Collin, Duras, Hermann, Hyvrard, Ingamy, Kofman, Kruteva, Lemone-Luccioni, Mirin, Montrelay, Rochefort, and Witing] some American questions; their answers provide a sparkling and often startling account of the difference between the two cultures with regard to feminism, the university, and the canon."*

—Galea Shewalter  
Princeton University

**\$35.00**

# AND WOMEN OF THE WORLD.



## INSPIRING INFLUENCES

TRADITION, REVISION,  
AND AFRO-AMERICAN  
WOMEN'S NOVELS

Michael Awkward

"There are very few critical texts which begin with the premise that there is an identifiable tradition of black women's writing or which attempt to document that tradition, and this is one of them"

—Mary Helen Washington  
University of Massachusetts, Boston  
Now in paperback \$14.00

## TENDER GEOGRAPHIES

WOMEN AND THE ORIGINS  
OF THE NOVEL IN FRANCE

Joan DeJean

By looking at French women writers in what is considered the Great Century of French Letters (1630-1715), DeJean argues that their writings were thought to be politically and socially subversive, and demonstrates that the modern novel owes its origins to their thoroughly political act of making the genre a revolutionary force

photos, \$35.00



## HAMLET'S MOTHER

AND OTHER WOMEN

Carolyn G. Heilbrun

"The essays in *Hamlet's*

*Mother* powerfully demonstrate the revolution feminism has incited in the interpretation of literature — as well as in the lives of some literary critics"

—The Philadelphia Inquirer  
\$34.50\*

## RAPE AND REPRESENTATION

Edited by  
Lynn A. Higgins and  
Brenda R. Silver

In our society, rape is seen as natural and inevitable. This essay collection concentrates on how cultural forms help construct and reinforce the very attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate sexual violence. Contributors include the editors, Coppelia Kahn, Nellie V. McKay, and Froma I. Zeitlin

\$35.00



## HONEY-MAD WOMEN

EMANCIPATORY STRATEGIES  
IN WOMEN'S WRITING

Patricia Yaeger

"A brilliant demonstration of the feminist critic as a revisionist mythmaker...its originality, its timeliness, its sophistication and, not least, its sheer exuberance ensure that *Honey-Mad Women* will inspire much discussion"

—Navel

Now in paperback \$16.00

**COLUMBIA  
UNIVERSITY  
PRESS**

DEPT. 520 • 126 SOUTH MCGRAWHILL, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35295 • TEL. (214) 391-8111 • FAX. (214) 391-8200

SEND CHECK/MONEY ORDER, INCLUDING \$3.00 FOR POSTAGE.

CALL OR FAX AND USE MC, VISA, OR AMEX. FOR CREDITCARD & CASH ON DELIVERY, AND SALES TAX.

\*For sale in the U.S. & Canada only.

# NEW FROM THE FREE PRESS



## **JUGGLING** **The Unexpected Advantages of Balancing Career and Home for Women and their Families**

Faye J. Crosby, *Smith College*

"A very significant expose of a new variant of the feminine mystique and its effects on the reality of women juggling home and work in the face of economic and political backsliding and backlash against women's movement to equality."

—Betty Friedan, author of  
*The Feminine Mystique*

October 1991 0-02-906705-7 \$19.95

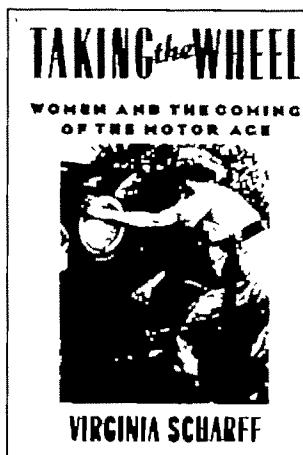
## **FREUD, DORA, AND VIENNA 1900**

Hannah S. Decker

"An excellent book—intelligent, scholarly, and well-executed. Decker does a wonderful job of locating both Freud and Dora in their historical context and of reconstructing attitudes about Jews, women, and doctors in turn-of-the-century Vienna. A great pleasure to read."

—Paul Robinson, author of  
*The Freudian Left*

1991 0-02-907830-X \$22.95



## **TAKING THE WHEEL** **Women and the Coming of the Motor Age** Virginia Scharff

"The first truly comprehensive social history of the female driver. Scharff is to be congratulated for her spell-binding contribution to the evolving literature of automotive anthropology."

—*The New York Times Book Review*  
1991 0-02-928135-0 \$22.95

## **AGATHA CHRISTIE** **The Woman and Her Mysteries** Gillian Gill

"Gill has done a diligent job...a re-evaluation of Christie the writer and her work from a feminist point of view. Readers with an interest in Christie's life will enjoy following the author as she examines the woman behind the work to produce a literary portrait of a brilliant, eccentric, extraordinarily talented woman."

—*The Boston Globe*  
1990 0-02-911702-X \$22.50

## IN THE WAKE OF THE GODDESSES

### Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth

Tikva Frymer-Kensky

Exploring the rich and powerful symbols of religion and culture that have shaped Western thought, this book traces the development of conceptions of nature, gender and sexuality from the goddesses of ancient Mesopotamian civilizations to the one God of Biblical monotheism.

October 1991 0-02-910800-4 \$24.95

## THE FEMALE FEAR

Margaret T. Gordon and  
Stephanie Riger

"Demonstrates that we cannot function as a true democracy as long as women's well-founded fear of rape inhibits our full participation in society. Gordon and Riger show that empirical social science work can be a tool for attaining full social equality for women without compromising the canons of science."

—Pauline B. Bart,  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
1988 0-02-912490-5 \$27.95

## COMING OUT UNDER FIRE

### The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II

Allan Berube

"Berube combines the history of sexuality with the history of wartime to create a provocative and stunning look at the military's experience with homosexuality during World War II."

—Estelle Freedman and John D'Emilio,  
authors of *Intimate Matters:  
A History of Sexuality in America*  
1990 0-02-903100-1 \$22.95

## WARM HEARTS AND COLD CASH

### The Intimate Dynamics of Families and Money

Marcia Millman,  
University of California, Santa Cruz

"With a remarkable eye for telling detail, Millman explores the tangle of money and love in family life. She shows how we use the tangibility of money to express the profound yet elusive emotions of attachment, loss, anger, envy, and guilt. The vivid examples—of arguments over saving and spending, of key moments when gifts are given or withheld—reveal the power of money to illuminate hidden and often poignant dynamics. A wonderful book!"

—Barrie Thorne,  
University of Southern California  
1991 0-02-921285-5 \$22.95

*In paperback—*

## BORN FOR LIBERTY

### A History of Women in America

Sara M. Evans

"Sensitive to differences of race, class and ethnicity, rich in detail, firmly grounded in the best scholarship in the field and strongly analytical—this is the best one-volume history of American women available to date."

—Gerda Lerner, author of  
*The Creation of Patriarchy*

"Should become required reading not only for those interested in women's history, but for all students of American history...and the general public as well."

—*The Los Angeles Times Book Review*  
1990 0-02-903090-0 \$14.95

**For Visa, MasterCard, or  
American Express orders,  
call toll-free 1-800-323-7445  
Monday through Friday  
between 8am-5:30pm Eastern time.**

Attention: College Professors: Examination copies will be sent on a 30-day approval basis only. Simply place your request on university stationery, indicating book requested, course title, projected enrollment, and date your next text decision is due. When ordering examination copies of paperbacks, enclose a check for \$2.00 per copy to cover postage and handling. Mail to: The Free Press, Attn: Lisa Weinberg, 866 Third Avenue, NY, NY 10022.



# THE FREE PRESS

A Division of Macmillan, Inc./A Maxwell Macmillan Company  
866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022



# HARVARD

## **Silencing the Self**

Women and Depression

Dana Crowley Jack



Dana Crowley Jack offers startling new insights into the roots of female depression as she illuminates, through discussion and the actual voices of women, why they are far more likely than men to suffer major depression in adulthood. This is the first sweeping overview of depression in women that draws on new understandings of the importance of relationships in women's lives.

\$19.95 cloth

## **His Other Half**

Men Looking at Women through Art

Wendy Lesser

"A model of the kind of flexible, interdisciplinary culture criticism that is desperately needed to bridge the gap between the general reader and the academic ghetto. Lesser, moving with graceful ease from literature and art to photography and cinema, is concerned with the image of woman as refracted through male imagination."

—Camille Page,

*Washington Post Book World*

\$24.95 cloth

## **Seductions**

Studies in Reading and Culture

Jane Miller

"One of the deadliest of seductions for feminists is their seduction by theorists, by theories." With this boldly polemical stroke, Jane Miller begins an exploration of how women experience themselves within ideas and traditions that simultaneously include and exclude them. Through five chapters which trace a historical progression from the eighteenth century to the present, she emphasizes the chilling ways in which cultural exclusions and degradations of women are internalized and replicated by complicitous victims.

*Convergences*

\$22.95 cloth

## **The Woman beneath the Skin**

A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany

Barbara Duden

Translated by Thomas Dunlap



In this provocative study, Barbara Duden delves into the records of an eighteenth-century German physician who meticulously documented the medical histories of eighteen hundred women of all ages and backgrounds, often in their own words. This unparalleled record of complaints, symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments reveals a deeply alien understanding of the female body and its functions.

\$24.95 cloth

## Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman

Nicole Loraux

"A vivid demonstration of how women die in Greek tragedy...Exciting and erudite...the graceful scholarship and sound judgment that Loraux demonstrates should nudge the classical tradition toward more writing in this direction."

—John Chabot, *New York Times Book Review*  
\$8.95 paper

## Elizabeth Bishop

Questions of Mastery  
Bonnie Costello



"A guide to Bishop's poetry and an appreciation of her unique qualities as an observer. The generous quotations from letters, drafts, journals, and occasional prose sketches both deepen and confirm the analysis here, and make the result a work of criticism that has some of the suggestive power of biography."

—David Bromwich

\$29.95 cloth

## Justice and Gender

Deborah L. Rhode

"The definitive treatment of the American legal system's struggle to deal with issues pertaining to gender...The strength of Rhode's analysis, however, is not its historical aspect but its probing view of modern gender issues...The focus is always in the deeper forces that have led to gender disadvantage... There is much to be learned from reading this volume."

—*Bimonthly Review of Law Books*

\$16.95 paper

## Toward a Feminist Theory of the State

Catharine A. MacKinnon



"Looking at the female and male halves of the world equally transforms everything—and [this book] makes that clear with scholarship, courage, and wit. By exposing and correcting the patriarchal values underlying nationalism and justice, Catharine MacKinnon causes an earthquake of thinking that rearranges every part of our intellectual landscape. This book is a 'must read.'" —Gloria Steinem

\$12.95 paper

## "Coming to Writing" and Other Essays

Hélène Cixous

Edited by Deborah Jensen

Translated by Sarah Cornell, Deborah Jensen, Ann Liddle, and Susan Sellers  
With an introductory essay by Susan Rubin Suleiman

Of Hélène Cixous's many and diverse writings, few have been translated into English. This collection presents six essays by one of France's most remarkable contemporary authors.

"Hélène Cixous is today, in my view, the greatest writer in what I will call my language, the French language if you like."

—Jacques Derrida

\$24.95 cloth

## Harvard University Press

79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 495-2480

# Northern Illinois



## **A Motor-Flight Through France**

**Edith Wharton**

Introduction by Mary Suzanne Schiber

*"The motor-car has restored the romance of travel."*—Edith Wharton

Escaping social confines that existed for women in America during the early twentieth century, Wharton set out to explore France in the newly invented "motor-car." In *A Motor-Flight Through France*, originally published in 1908, Wharton chronicles her travels, combining the power of her prose, her love for travel, and her affinity for France. This compelling travelogue records Wharton's early impressions of the country she later claimed as her own and offers genuinely good reading for anyone wishing to see France through the eyes of a great American writer.

250 pages illus. \$28.00 cloth \$12.50 paper

## **Memoirs of a Revolutionist**

**Vera Figner**

Introduction by Richard Stites

In this remarkable work, a courageous woman recounts her journey from aristocrat to revolutionary in nineteenth-century Russia, candidly relating the experiences that shaped her ideas and provoked her to political action culminating in the assassination of Alexander II. As she reflects on her own lifelong commitment to improving the lives of ordinary Russians, she reveals much about the role of women in the Russian revolutionary movement. The introduction to this new edition provides background for understanding Figner's struggle for "equality and freedom, for the happiness of Russia and all humanity."

336 pages illus. \$12.50 paper



## Women of the Klan

Racism and Gender in the 1920s

**KATHLEEN M. BLEE**

"Probably no future history of the Ku Klux Klan will be written without reference to this ground-breaking work."—*Publishers Weekly*

"A remarkable, nuanced, and deeply disturbing book . . . Blee succeeds in making Klanswomen vivid, a sobering illustration of what Hannah Arendt called the 'banality of evil' "

—Sara M. Evans,

author of *Born for Liberty*

*A Centennial Book* \$24.95 cloth  
236 pages, illustrated



## The New American Studies

Essays from *Representations*

**Edited by PHILIP FISHER**

In these essays a new generation of Americanists deals a fatal blow to the idea of a unified American culture. They alert us to the contest for representation in a modern print culture.

*A Representations Book* \$45.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper  
390 pages, illustrated

## Authoritarian Socialism in America

Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement

**ARTHUR LIPOW**

**Now in paper with a new preface—**

"An important book, vital to our understanding of the development of socialism in America."—*Journal of American Studies*

"An intellectual history of genuine distinction."—*Modern Philology*

\$13.95 paper, 332 pages

## Sentinel for Health

A History of the Centers for Disease Control

**ELIZABETH W. ETHERIDGE**

In the only history of its kind, Etheridge traces the development of the Centers for Disease Control from its inception as a malaria control unit during World War II through the mid-1980s. Drawing on hundreds of interviews and documents, Etheridge reveals the state of public health in this country for the last five decades.

\$42.50 cloth, 384 pages, illustrated

## Into One's Own

From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975

**JOHN MODELL**

**Now in paper—**"This magnificent historical account and sensitive interpretation evoke great admiration for Modell's meticulous scholarship. . . . Superb."

—*Journal of Marriage and the Family*

\$14.95 paper, 428 pages

At bookstores or order toll-free 1-800-822-6657 Visa & MasterCard only

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS**  
BERKELEY • LOS ANGELES • NEW YORK • OXFORD

Available October '91

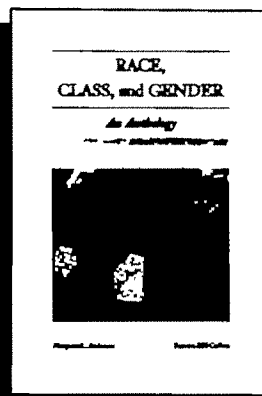
## **RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER: An Anthology**

**Margaret L. Andersen,**  
*University of Delaware*

**Patricia Hill Collins,**  
*University of Cincinnati*

*"Andersen and Hill Collins add significantly to the developing interdisciplinary, inclusive scholarship transforming the Liberal Arts. The introductions to each section provide the reader with the expansive, matrix-like framework necessary to work through the meaning of the many-faceted presentation of human experiences. This text should prove particularly useful for interdisciplinary courses in Women's Studies, Ethnic Studies, Sociology, and Political Science as well as providing excellent resource material for the Humanities."* —Johnnella E. Butler,

*Chair, American Ethnic Studies Department,  
University of Washington*



**Wadsworth Publishing Company • 10 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002**

## **WOMEN'S STUDIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES:**

Rank and area open; tenurable full-time position in Women's Studies for candidate with PhD in social sciences. Expertise in issues of race and ethnicity, interest in feminist theory necessary. Please send resume, two current letters of reference and one current writing sample; search remains open until filled. Applications from women of color are especially welcome. Chair, Search Committee, Department of Women's Studies, Barnard College, 3009 Broadway, New York, NY 10027.

# The Beacon Approach to Women's Studies

## The Dancing Goddess

Principles of a Matriarchal Aesthetic

**HEIDE GÖTTNER-ABENDROTH**

Translated by Maureen T. Krause

Blending theory, criticism, and ritual, *The Dancing Goddess* looks at a wide array of contemporary artists to reveal the links between matriarchal art and contemporary women's spirituality. "Göttner-Abendroth's soaring, unifying vision should have broad appeal."—*Booklist*, starred review

\$15.95 paper 0-8070-6753-9

## Vagabonding

Feminist Thinking Cut Loose

**CHRISTINA THÜRMER-ROHR**

Translated by Lise Weil

Radical feminist Christina

Thürmer-Rohr offers a shocking critique of women's roles in Western patriarchy. "These provocative essays should have a liberating effect on women's (and men's) thoughts and feelings."—*Publishers Weekly*

\$22.95 cloth 0-8070-6756-3



## The Past is Before Us

Feminism in Action since the 1960s

**SHEILA ROWBOTHAM**

"With her customary passion and insight, Rowbotham has summed up two decades of feminist thought and actions. By telling us where we've been, she gives feminists a fuller sense of ourselves and our story."—Ann Snitow,

New School for Social Research

\$14.95 paper 0-8070-6759-8

INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING SINCE 1854

Beacon Press / 25 Beacon St. / Boston, MA 02108 / 617-742-2110 ext. 596

# PENELOPE'S RENOWN



Meaning and Indeterminacy  
in the *Odyssey*

MARYLIN A. KATZ

Noted for her contradictory words and actions, Penelope has been a problematic character for critics of the *Odyssey*, many of whom turn to psychological explanations to account for her behavior. In a fresh approach to the problem, Marilyn Katz argues that the danger that Penelope will betray Odysseus as Clytemnestra did Agamemnon is kept alive throughout the first half of the poem. Once Odysseus reaches Ithaca, however, the paradigm of Helen's faithlessness substitutes for that of Clytemnestra. The surface meaning of Penelope's words and actions is undermined though never openly discredited.

Cloth: \$35.00 ISBN 0-691-06798-1

*Princeton University Press*

41 WILLIAM ST. • PRINCETON, NJ 08540  
ORDERS: 800-PRS-ISBN (777-4726)

The Women's Studies program at the University of Arizona invites applications for three tenure-track positions, beginning in August 1992 (pending funding). Appointments are expected to be joint appointments in the appropriate department and Women's Studies. Applicants from all disciplines within the Humanities and Social Sciences are encouraged to apply. Appointees will be involved in developing both graduate and undergraduate courses in Women's Studies. For all positions, minority candidates are especially urged to apply. Please send a letter of application, vita, writing sample, and three letters of reference to: Search Committee, Women's Studies, The University of Arizona, Douglas 102, Tucson, AZ 85721. Applications will be processed beginning October 15, 1991.

1) **WOMEN OF COLOR:** We seek applicants whose research focuses on women of color or treats systematically ethnicity, class, and cultural diversity, as well as gender. Ph.D. is preferred, as is evidence of excellence in teaching on gender and cultural diversity. Rank open.

2) **FEMINIST THEORY:** Applicants must be able to teach cross-disciplinary feminist theory courses at the undergraduate and graduate level and must have a demonstrated research interest in any area of feminist theory. Ph.D. is preferred, as is evidence of excellence in teaching, especially in Women's Studies.

3) **WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY:** Applicants must be able to teach from a feminist perspective "Introduction to Women's Studies" and/or "Women in Western Culture," (preferably both), and to develop other upper-division and graduate courses. Demonstrated commitment to feminist interdisciplinary research is required. Ph.D. is preferred, as is evidence of excellence in teaching, especially in Women's Studies.

The University of Arizona is an Affirmative Action Employer and actively seeks the candidacy of minorities and women.

## Dishing It Out

Waitresses and Their Unions  
in the Twentieth Century

*Dorothy Sue Cobble*

"Rich in detail, studded with telling anecdotes, *Dishing It Out* is just as vivid and evocative as its title suggests. . . . Speaks with clarity and good sense to the major debates in the history of work and gender and will become a landmark in our growing understanding of the relationships between the two."

— Susan Porter Benson, author  
of *Counter Cultures*. Illus. \$34.95

*New paperbacks*

## Seed of Sarah

Memoirs of a Survivor

*Judith Magyar Isaacson*

"European culture may have failed the human race during the crucial Holocaust years, but it is vindicated in this memoir in the person of the young Judith Magyar." — Freema Gottlieb, *New York Times Book Review*. Includes a new final chapter detailing Isaacson's recent trips back to her former forced labor camp in Germany. Paper, \$12.95

## Labor's Flaming Youth

Telephone Operators and Worker  
Militancy, 1878-1923

*Stephen H. Norwood*

"A treat to read. A fine book in every way, it is thoughtfully argued and gracefully written, and it reaches across a remarkable range of primary and secondary materials." — Kai Erikson, *Yale Review*. Illus. Paper, \$12.95

## Center Stage

An Anthology of Twenty-one Con-  
temporary Black-American Plays

*Edited by Eileen Joyce Ostrow*

"A stupendous work." — Horace B. Caple, *Encore*. "Running through these plays is a sensitivity toward black women. . . . *Center Stage* is a joy and an illumination." — Gabrielle Daniels, *San Francisco Chronicle*. Illus. Paper, \$19.95



## Their Eyes Were Watching God

*Zora Neale Hurston*

*Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney*

*Foreword by Ruby Dee*

*Introduction by Sherley Anne Williams*

Since its release in a paperback edition by the University of Illinois Press in 1978, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has been the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African-American literature. With this publication of a richly illustrated deluxe edition, a novel by a black woman is accorded the treatment it deserves. Its appearance will be especially welcomed by the thousands of readers who were introduced to *Their Eyes* in the classroom. 9 original illustrations. Cloth, \$29.95

Order toll free 800/545-4703 from

## UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

P. O. Box 4856

Hampden Post Office

Baltimore, MD 21211



## Ambiguous Lives

*Free Women of Color  
in Rural Georgia, 1789-1879*

Adele Logan Alexander

"An engrossing story, *Ambiguous Lives* offers the first attempt to track the hidden story of free women of color in antebellum Georgia. Her determined sleuthing opens a new dimension of antebellum women's history that will contribute to our understanding of the complexity of human relations in the Old South as well as the origins of the southern black bourgeoisie."

—Elizabeth Fox-Genovese,  
author of *Within the  
Plantation Household*

\$23.00 cloth

## Evening the Score

*Women in Music and the  
Legacy of Frédérique Petrides*

Jan Bell Groh

Through her unique newsletters, Frédérique Petrides, one of America's first and most influential female conductors, championed the achievements of women who were forced to ply their trade in all-female orchestras and condemned and exposed the prejudices of many of their male counterparts.

\$25.00 cloth

 **ARKANSAS**

The University of Arkansas Press  
1-800-525-1823

## Copies of articles from this publication are now available from UMI Article Clearinghouse.

For more information about the  
Clearinghouse, please fill out and mail  
back the coupon below.

The UMI Article Clearinghouse offers articles from more than 11,000 copyright-cleared periodicals in a wide range of subjects. You can place your orders electronically, as well as by phone, mail, and telefacsimile. For more information, please complete and mail this coupon to UMI Article Clearinghouse, 300 North Zeeb Road, Box 11, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 USA. Or call toll-free for an immediate response: 800-521-0600. From Alaska and Michigan call collect 313-761-4700. From Canada, call toll-free 800-343-5299.

YES! I'd like to know more about UMI Article Clearinghouse.

Name

Title

Company/Institution

Address

City/State/Zip

Telephone (  )

**U·M·I**

A Bell & Howell Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 USA

## **EXPLORE THE COMPLEX ISSUES OF GENDER AND PSYCHIATRY**



### **Women and Men: New Perspectives on Gender Differences**

Edited by Malkah T. Notman, MD, and Carol C. Nadelson, MD

*Women and Men: New Perspectives on Gender Differences* presents perspectives and data from the biological and social sciences that

contribute to our current understanding of gender differences, their range and extent, and how they are influenced and created by social, cultural, and biological factors. Ten contributors from the diverse fields of anthropology, economics, education, endocrinology, neurophysiology, psychiatry, and women's studies come together in this book to explore research on gender differences from a variety of perspectives.

**Contents:** Introduction. Gender differences: interpreting anthropological data. Economic perspectives on work and family issues. A review of gender differences in brain and behavior. Sex differences in the brain: what they are and how they arise. Reconstructing the psychology of women: an overview. Gender ideology and the brain: sex differences research. The acquisition of mature femininity. Ground rules for marriage: perspectives on the pattern of an era. Gender development. Epilogue. Afterword. Index.

1990/128 pages/ISBN 0-88048-136-6  
\$18.50 paperback/Order #SR5A8136

### **Psychiatric Aspects of Abortion**

Edited by Nada L. Stotland, MD

The contributors to this volume summarize research studies on the psychiatric effects of abortion, including long-term psychiatric impact, and the psychological consequences of denied abortion, illegal abortion, and unwanted pregnancy. A review of psychotherapeutic issues focuses on the importance of risk-benefit data in helping women make decisions about abortion, and the cultural and ethical considerations that affect those contemplating abortion. This edited volume will serve as a guide for both mental health practitioners and lay people who must grapple with the effects of judicial, legislative, and cultural change on the psychological health of women who are contemplating, or have undergone, an abortion.

May 1991/240 pages/ISBN 0-88048-451-9  
\$32.50 hardcover/Order #SR5A8451

**Once a  
common-law  
right of women  
during the  
American  
Revolution,  
abortion now  
exists in a whirl  
of controversy.**

**To Charge Your Order  
Call Toll Free 1-800-368-5777  
Monday-Friday 9AM-5 PM**



# Feeding the Mind

## Feeding the Family

*The Social Organization of Caring as Gendered Work*

**Marjorie L. DeVault**

With a Foreword by Catharine R. Stimpson

"Marjorie DeVault's study of *Feeding the Family* makes the familiar strange. Her sophisticated and exacting method of inquiry opens up levels of delicacy obliterated by commonsense names for women's work at home."—Dorothy E. Smith, Ontario Institute of Secondary Education

Cloth \$24.95 (est.) 200 pages (est.)

1 line drawing, 3 tables

Women in Culture and Society series



## Heavenly Supper

*The Story of Maria Janis*

**Fulvio Tomizza**

Translated by Anne Jacobson Schutte

Combining the historian's precision with the novelist's imagination, Fulvio Tomizza painstakingly reconstructs the story of the peasant woman Maria Janis, crafting a fascinating portrait of sublimated love, ambition, and jealousy set in seventeenth-century Italy.

"Told with the skills of the formidable novelist that Fulvio Tomizza is, and ably translated and introduced by Anne Jacobson Schutte, this book is a thoroughly good read."

—Rudolph M. Bell, author of *Holy Anorexia*

Cloth \$24.95 184 pages

Now in Paper

## Sowing the Body

*Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women*

**Page duBois**

With a Foreword by Catharine R. Stimpson

In this radical examination of women in classical Greece from the time of Homer to the time of Plato, duBois demonstrates how the female gender in the classical period was seen through an elaborate set of metaphors. "Ingenious and stimulating, especially for the reader interested in classical scholarship."

—Radu Savarenu, *Psychoanalytic Books*

Paper \$12.95 248 pages Women in Culture and Society series

**The University of Chicago Press**

5801 South Ellis Chicago, IL 60637

**Oxford**

**A Family Venture  
Men and Women in the  
Southern Frontier**

JOAN E. CASHIN

This book is about the different ways that men and women experienced migration from the Southern seaboard to the antebellum Southern frontier. Based upon extensive research in planter family papers, Cashin studies how the sexes went to the frontier with diverging agendas: men tried to escape the family, while women tried to preserve it. Drawing on rich archival sources, Cashin examines the decision of families to migrate, the effects of migration on planter family life, and the way old ties were maintained and new ones formed.

1991 208 pp. \$24.95

**Representing Femininity  
Middle-Class Subjectivity in  
Victorian and Edwardian  
Women's Autobiographies**

MARY JEAN CORBETT

Challenging the assumption that middle-class women were confined solely to domesticity, Corbett examines the rhetorical strategies of self-representations by women who participated in public life. She uses autobiographies by religious women writers, secular writers, Victorian actresses, and suffragettes, to bring to light a broad range of self-representation that has been unduly slighted in feminist historical, cultural, and literary analysis.

November 1991 252 pp. \$34.50

**Rhetoric and Irony  
Western Literacy and  
Western Lies**

C. JAN SWEARINGEN

"Swearingen's revisionist historical approach to rhetoric provides a challenging basis for ethical dialogue in the teaching of literacy in our multicultural society. She offers as well interesting suggestions from a feminist perspective looking toward a middle ground between logocentrism and deconstruction."—George A. Kennedy, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

1991 344 pp. \$32.50

**Rebel Daughters  
Women and the French  
Revolution**

Edited by SARA E. MELZER and LESLIE W. RABINE

This interdisciplinary collection of essays examines the important and paradoxical relation between women and the French Revolution. Although the male leaders of the Revolution depended on the women's active militant participation, they denied to women the rights they helped to establish. This volume analyzes how the revolutionary process constructed a new gender system at the foundation of modern liberal culture.

1991 288 pp. paper \$14.95 cloth \$35.00

**The Garden of Priapus  
Sexuality and Aggression  
in Roman Humor**

Revised Edition

AMY RICHLIN

"A comprehensive, frank, and bold analysis....Abundant insights from today's social sciences, together with references to numerous modern sex 'types' and studies on sexuality and verbal obscenity, support Richlin's observation and...underlie her concern...that in our own society and in antiquity sexual humor may 'serve not only to reinforce, but possibly to exacerbate aggressive tendencies.'"—*Choice*

February 1992 80 pp.

paper \$12.95 cloth \$49.95

**Their Fathers' Daughters  
Hannah More, Maria  
Edgeworth, and  
Patriarchal Complicity**

ELIZABETH KOWALESKI-WALLACE

Current feminist theory has developed powerful explanations for some women writers' rebellion against patriarchy. But other women writers did not rebel; rather, they supported and celebrated patriarchy. Examining the lives and selected works of two late eighteenth-century writers, this book explores what it means for a woman writer to identify with her father and the patriarchal tradition he represents.

1991 256 pp. \$29.95

*Prices are subject to change and apply only in the U.S.*

To order, send check or money order to: Humanities Marketing, Dept. MG

To order by phone using major credit cards please call (212)679-7300, ext.7106

**Oxford University Press**

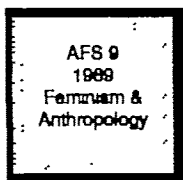
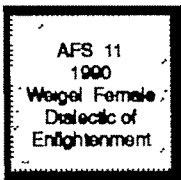
200 Madison Avenue + New York, NY 10016



# Australian Feminist Studies

"..... Is a gift to the whole world that cares about intellectual transformations."

*Catharine R. Stimpson*



## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS (payable to *Australian Feminist Studies*)

Name (block letters) .....

Address .....

Please enrol me as a subscriber to *Australian Feminist Studies* starting with issue No...../renew my subscription (Tick appropriate rate).

	Australian dollars	US dollars	Sterling
Individual (surface mail)	\$38.00 ( )	\$30.00 ( )	£14.50 ( )
(airmail)	\$53.00 ( )	\$43.00 ( )	£21.50 ( )
Institution (surface mail)	\$60.00 ( )	\$47.00 ( )	£24.25 ( )
(airmail)	\$75.00 ( )	\$58.75 ( )	£30.25 ( )

Cheque/bank draft/International money order for ..... enclosed, or charge

VISA ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

OR Mastercard ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

OR Bankcard ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

valid from .....until end.....signature.....

All subscriptions should be sent to the Research Centre for Women's Studies, University of Adelaide, GPO Box 498, Adelaide, South Australia 5001.

# The Biography of Alice B. Toklas

Linda Simon

"A study that shows Toklas as she must have been . . . a multifaceted and complex creature with her own tastes and standards. . . [her story] is an emotionally stirring experience." — *Washington Post Book World*, October. \$12.95

## Shakespeare and Company

*New Bison Book Edition*

Sylvia Beach

Introduction by

James Laughlin

"[Miss Beach's] reminiscences are literally an index of everybody in the twenties, and she knew them all."

— Janet Flanner, *New Yorker*.

In 1919 Sylvia Beach opened an American bookshop in Paris called Shakespeare and Company. October. \$8.95

## The Shakespearean Wild *Geography, Genre, and Gender*

Jeanne Addison Roberts

"A significant view of women in Shakespeare against a large background of the Wild." — Maurice Charney, author of *Comedy High and Low*. \$32.50



Available from bookstores or from  
The University of Nebraska Press  
901 N 17th • Lincoln 68588-0520  
(800) 755-1105  
*publishers since 1941*

*Nebraska*

# 1993 BERKSHIRE CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF WOMEN

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The 9th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, "Transformations: Women, Gender, Power," will be held on June 11-13, 1993, at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY, USA. The Program Committee welcomes proposals addressing the relations between feminist history and social and political practice and papers taking an interdisciplinary or comparative approach crossing national, cultural, racial, or ethnic lines. The Conference encourages international participation and perspectives.

We prefer submission of proposals for complete panels (to include a maximum of two papers, one commentator, and a moderator) or roundtables. Individual papers will also be considered. The Program Committee may rearrange panels; submission of a proposal will be taken as agreement with this proviso.

Please submit proposals in triplicate by February 1, 1992, and include: panel title; title and one-page abstract of each paper (or roundtable theme); and one-page vita for each participant, including current address and telephone number. Enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard for return on receipt of packet.

Send proposals on U.S. topics to: Elaine Abelson, New School for Social Research, Eugene Lang College, 65 West 11th Street, New York, NY 10011; on other than U.S. topics to: Margaret Hunt, Amherst College, 2254, P.O. Box 5000, Amherst, MA 01002-5000; comparative U.S. / non-U.S. topics may be sent to either Program Committee Co-Chair. Please direct all correspondence to "ATTN: Berkshire Conference".

**Oxford**

## Women's America

**Refocusing the Past**

*Third Edition*

LINDA K. KERBER, *University of Iowa*,  
and JANE SHERRON DE HART,  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*



1991 608 pp.; 13 illus. paper \$18.95  
cloth \$45.00

*New in paper!*

## Understanding the Gender Gap

**An Economic History of American Women**

CLAUDIA GOLDIN, *Harvard University*

"An excellent study of the evolution of gender differences....Combines insightful analyses of the impact of market factors with an appreciation of the role of institutions, social norms, and prejudices....An invaluable historical perspective."—Francine D. Blau, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

1990 (paper November 1991) 320 pp., 21 illus.  
paper \$14.95 cloth \$29.95

*New!*

## Russian Peasant Women

Edited by BEATRICE FARNSWORTH,  
*Wells College*, and LYNNE VIOLA,  
*University of Toronto*

"An important and useful collection that fills a wide gap....Analytically strong, centering on the household as the framework for exploring the changing lives of rural women and Glasnost" —Jean H. Quaintart, *State University of New York, Binghamton*

January 1992 320 pp.; 7 illus. paper \$12.95  
cloth \$39.95

*New!*

## Mountain Goddess

**Gender and Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage**

WILLIAM S. SAX, *University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand*

This anthropological study of the cult of Nandadevi draws on formal Indian theories, verbal commentaries, songs, interviews, articles, propaganda, legends, pan-Indian Sanskrit liturgies, and historical documents.

1991 256 pp.; 1 map paper \$13.95 cloth \$35.00

*New!*

## Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome

Edited by AMY RICHLIN, *University of Southern California, Los Angeles*

"Makes a substantial contribution to classical studies....Informed, clear, compelling....Should have considerable appeal....to anyone interested in antiquity and sexuality."—David Konstan, *Brown University*

November 1991 384 pp.; 44 illus.  
paper \$14.95 cloth \$45.00

*New in paperback!*

## Emerging From the Chrysalis

**Rituals of Women's Initiation**

BRUCE LINCOLN, *University of Minnesota*

"Highly recommended for both specialists and the general reader in the study of ritual, women, and the anthropology of religion."—*Religious Studies Review*

1991 184 pp.; 29 illus. paper \$12.95

## Women and Social Protest

Edited by GUIDA WEST, *Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, New York*, and RHODA LOIS BLUMBERG, *Rutgers University*

"An interesting collection of readings about women and the social protest movement.... Should provide a springboard for lively classroom discussion."

—Robert W. Langran, *Villanova University*  
1990 416 pp. paper \$18.95 cloth \$49.95

*Prices and publication dates are subject to change*

To request an examination copy, write on school letterhead, giving full course information, including course name, level, expected enrollment, and your decision deadline, to

**Oxford University Press**

ATTN: College Sales Coordinator

200 Madison Avenue • New York, NY 10016



# SPECIAL BACK ISSUE SAVINGS

## Signs

Enhance your reference collection with significant scholarship from recent back issues. Choose single issues, volumes, or a set of all issues remaining in our inventory. But, hurry — availability is limited to current inventory at the time your order is processed.

### LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Marilyn R. Farwell, *Toward a Definition of the Lesbian Literary Imagination* 14:1  
Michelle A. Massé, *Gothic Repetition: Husbands, Horrors, and Things That Go Bump in the Night* 15:4  
Gayle Greene, *Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory* 16:2

### SCIENCE, PSYCHOLOGY, AND SEXUALITY

Judith Lewis Herman, *Considering Sex Offenders: A Model of Addiction* 13:4  
Monica Green, *Women's Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe* 14:2

### FEMINIST THEORY

Jane Flax, *Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory* 12:4  
Deborah King, *The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology* 14:1

### HISTORY

Mary Martin McLaughlin, *The Case of Corpus Domini, Ferrara, 1406-1452* 14:2  
Sarah Deutsch, *Women and Intercultural Relations* 12:4

### CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Rebecca Klatch, *Coalition and Conflict among Women of the New Right* 13:4  
Patricia J. Williams, *On Being the Object of Property* 14:1

### HIGHER EDUCATION

Elizabeth Young-Bruhl, *The Education of Women as Philosophers* 12:2

### SPECIAL ISSUES

*Women, Gender, and Theory* 12:4  
*Women and the Political Process* 13:1  
*Working Together in the Middle Ages* 14:2  
*The Ideology of Mothering* 15:3

Set of 15 remaining issues (vols. 12-15) at 50% off:

☐ Individuals \$65.55 ☐ Institutions \$138.75

Individual volumes\* 12-16 (4 issues/volume) at 35% off: ☐ Individuals \$22.15

☐ Institutions \$47.50

☐ Vol. 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16

Single issues\* at 25% off: ☐ Individuals \$6.30 ☐ Institutions \$13.65

List by vol./no.: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Out of Stock: 14:4. All journal rates include domestic postage. Outside USA add 75¢ per issue additional postage. Canadians, please add 7% GST.

☐ Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Acct. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check enclosed (payable to journal) ☐ Purchase order enclosed

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your order with payment to The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637

SF2BK

# A Woman Making History

*Mary Ritter Beard Through Her Letters*

edited and with an introduction by Nancy F. Cott

Historian, social reformer, and women's suffrage campaigner, Mary Ritter Beard (1876-1958) founded the modern field of women's history. This collection of her letters, edited and introduced by Nancy F. Cott, offers in effect an intellectual biography—a uniquely vital portrait that gives Beard the recognition she is due.

"[A] striking collection of letters....Fascinating."—Mary Beth Norton, *The New York Times Book Review* \$35.00

Also available: Nancy F. Cott's *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* \$13.00 paperback



Courtesy of Oxford University Press

# Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory

Nancy J. Chodorow

The author of *The Reproduction of Mothering* traces the development of her views on the psychodynamics, sociology, and culture of gender.

"Through her deepening reflections on gender issues and her study of the reality of women's lives, Ms. Chodorow puts both Freud and feminism to the test."—Stuart Schneiderman, *The New York Times Book Review* \$14.00



Now available  
in paperback

# No Man's Land

*The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century  
Volume 2: Sexchanges*

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar

"[This book] will set the direction of feminist criticism for the next generation of students and scholars."—Walter Kendrick, *The New York Times Book Review*

"*Sexchanges* is a provocative work, characterized by the wit and erudition we have come to expect from these two critics."—Elyse Blankley, *Women's Review of Books* Illus. \$17.95

Also available: Volume 1: *The War of the Words* \$12.95 paperback

Now available  
in paperback



Courtesy of Oxford University Press



**Yale University Press**

Dept. 709, 92A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520

# WOMEN'S HISTORY

## REVIEW

*Women's History Review* is a major new international journal whose aim is to provide a forum for the publication of new scholarly articles in the rapidly expanding field of women's history. The time span covered by the journal includes the 19th and 20th centuries as well as earlier times.

The journal seeks to publish contributions from a range of disciplines (for example, women's studies, history, sociology, cultural studies, literature, political science, anthropology and philosophy) that further feminist knowledge and debate about women and/or gender relations in history.

The Editors welcome a variety of approaches from people from different countries and different backgrounds. In addition to main articles, usually between 3,000 and 10,000 words, the journal also publishes shorter Viewpoints (about 3,000 words) that are possibly based on the life experiences, ideas and views of the writer and may be more polemic in tone. A substantial Book Review section is included in each issue.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles for submission to the journal are now being actively sought. Manuscripts (four copies please) should be sent to Dr June Purvis, *Women's History Review*, School of Social and Historical Studies, Portsmouth Polytechnic, Burnaby Road, Portsmouth PO1 3AS, United Kingdom. Each article should be accompanied by a summary of 100-150 words on a separate sheet of paper. All submissions will be seen anonymously by two referees. Books for review should be sent to June Hannam, Humanities Department, Bristol Polytechnic, Oldbury Court Road, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2JP, United Kingdom.

### EDITOR

June Purvis, School of Social and Historical Studies, Portsmouth Polytechnic, United Kingdom.

### DEPUTY EDITOR

Philippa Levine, Department of History, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Carole Elizabeth Adams, Australia; Judith A. Allen, Australia; Olive Banks, UK; Francoise Beah, France; Dedic Beddoe, UK; Joanna Bornat, UK; Barbara Brookings, New Zealand; Barbara Bush, UK; Barbara Carne, Australia; Carol Dyhouse, UK; Deborah Gornham, Canada; June Hannam, UK; Bridget Hill, UK; Elaine Hobby, UK; Sandra Holton, Australia; Shelle Jeffreys, UK; Susan K. Kent, USA; S. Jay Kleinberg, UK; Hilary Land, UK; Selma Leydesdorff, Netherlands; Susan Mearns, Australia; Jane Marcus, USA; Jill Julius Matthews, Australia; Mary Maynard, UK; Lynda Neale, UK; Bybil Oldfield, UK; Alison Oram, UK; Elen Reynolds, UK; Vicki Ruiz, USA; Mary Lyndon Shanley, USA; Dorothy Sheridan, UK; Kathryn Kish Sklar, USA; Dale Spender, Australia; Liz Stanley, UK; Penny Summerfield, UK; Janet Todd, UK.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

*Women's History Review* is published three times a year (March, June and October), those three issues constituting one volume. The final issue of each year contains an index and title-page to that volume. Volume 1, Number 1, March 1982. ISSN 0961-2025.

One year (one volume), post free.

United Kingdom £54.00 (individuals £27.00)

USA & Canada US\$98.00 (individuals US\$49.00)

Rest of the World £60.00 (individuals £30.00)

All orders must be prepaid. Sterling/UK pounds cheques should be drawn on United Kingdom banks. To order the journal please complete the order form below and send it to Triangle Books Ltd, PO Box 85, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 0YG, United Kingdom.

### ORDER FORM

- ☐ Please enter our subscription to  
*Women's History Review*

We enclose payment of \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Please enter my subscription. I understand that  
this subscription is for my personal use only and  
that I must not make it available to a library.

I enclose payment of \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge

- ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ EuroCard ☐ Access

No. \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Please send an inspection copy of the first issue

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

TRIANGLE BOOKS LTD, PO BOX 85, WALLINGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE OX10 0YG, UNITED KINGDOM